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SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 495. FOR WEEK ENDING JUNE 25TH, 1898. [ONE PENNY.

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SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON

No. 495.] [One Penny.

For the Week ending June 25th, 1898.

TWO ACCIDENTS THAT DID GOOD.

They had agreed to differ about it. Husbands and wives who agree without differing are a trifle old-fashioned and grumpy nowadays; husbands and wives who differ without agreeing are also somewhat behind these times, when a certain calm independence is the fashionable keynote of marital existence, and Mr. and Mrs. Buller were eminently up-to-date.

The first two years of their married life had been spent practically out of the world, in consequence of the state of health of Mr. Buller's father. Then had come their succession to the property, and a period of retirement—they were a trifle old-fashioned in those days, it will be seen, and then they had launched out into the world of Society.

They went with the stream with that enthusiasm which not infrequently attends new experiences. She was an extremely pretty and dainty little personage, with charming wit, and a very few weeks of social life put quite an extraordinary polish on her.

He was good-looking too, not particularly clever, but quite capable of following the lead set him by his fellows, and cheery and good-natured withal.

There was plenty of money; they became immensely

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popular, and found a thorough-going Society life altogether delightful.

The head of each was a little turned, perhaps, by the end of their first season. Each was secretly convinced that the old "spooney" relations would not do. It was ridiculous to care for the society of your husband or wife. It was "the thing" to live independent lives. Independent lives, however, are not always, it appears, to be achieved at a word by two wholesome-minded young people living in the same house and sharing the same round of pleasure.

Alice Buller was a coquette, but there was a touch of delicate haughtiness in her, and she was incapable of a vulgar flirtation. Also, George Buller would have been incapable of jealousy where she was concerned, so that when at last a tangible subject of dispute presented itself husband and wife alike jumped at it with avidity.

The subject in question was thoroughly up-to-date—which was as it should be. At first it cost Mr. Buller a pang to realise that the side he had accidentally adopted was that behind the times. But he had an obstinate fibre in him, so he nailed his colours to the mast like a man.

The moot point was the bicycle craze.

He would have none of it, in any shape or form; he derided it where men were concerned; for women, he declared it not unsuitable—he knew his age better than that—but, what was far worse, ridiculously unbecoming.

Mrs. Buller, on the other hand, threw herself into the movement heart and soul. Her bicycle was for her the centre of the universe. Nothing could have been better. The husband and wife agreed to differ, as has been said, in most approved fashion, and for the rest of the season they hardly met.

For people who had arrived at so desirable an understanding, however, they were arguing the question rather hotly as they sat over the dinner table on a certain evening in February.

"Where does the fun come in?" Mr. Buller was demanding indignantly; "that's what I can't make out! Of course, one wouldn't care about the thing being dangerous if the game were worth the candle."

Mrs. Buller was drawing patterns on the tablecloth with her dessert fork.

"That's obvious," she returned with spirit, "or you wouldn't want to ride a horrid horse."

"Horses don't side-slip—or whatever you call it."

"Bicycles don't shy—neither do they rear."

Mr. Buller rose wrathfully and walked to the fireplace, taking up a majestic position on the hearthrug.

"One thing is you'll soon be tired of it," he observed. "You never keep a thing up for long."

Mrs. Buller rose impetuously. She appeared to have lost her temper.

"I love it more than ever," she cried, "and I always shall!" With which incoherent observation she withdrew.

The breakfast-room was empty when Mr. Buller strolled down at about half-past nine on the following morning. This did not surprise him, but the message delivered to him by a servant did.

"Mrs. Buller told me to say, if you please, sir," said the man, "that she has ridden over to Fernhill on her bicycle, and will lunch there."

"What time will she be back?" demanded her husband.

"About five o'clock, sir," was the answer.

Mr. Buller unfolded his newspaper and ground his teeth.

"The whole day!" he ejaculated to himself. "Well, I must say—— However, she'll be tired. Forty miles there and back; and then she'll go to sleep all the evening. Well, hanged if I care! Wonder at what time she started, and how far she's got."

As a matter of fact, though Mrs. Buller had started some time since, she had not made any remarkable progress. It was a delightful, spring-like day, but the state of the roads was not all that could be desired. At this identical moment she was walking along a particularly unpleasant combination of ruts and mud, wheeling her bicycle.

Mrs. Buller had her detractors, as have all successful people; and there were those who said that she rode a bicycle because she looked so well in the dress. Her short, tailor-made skirt and neat hat certainly suited her to perfection this morning, and her little feet, in the daintiest imaginable shoes, were a delight to behold. But Mrs. Buller did not appear to be thinking of her appearance just then—she was obviously taking no pleasure in it.

Her piquant face was rosy with air and exercise, but it was distinctly overcast in expression, and her every movement, as she wheeled her machine with incredible carelessness over the ruts, was expressive of boredom and disgust. The bad bit of road passed, she stood for an instant contemplating her bicycle with an indescribable expression.

"I shall never be able to give the thing up," she said to herself despairingly. "Never! If I did, he'd think I wanted—Oh, what a bore it is!"

She mounted as she spoke with a despairing sigh. Perhaps she was careless, perhaps the wheel slipped. At any rate, the next thing of which she was aware was a general upheaval of the universe, which left her lying in the road with a broken bicycle beside her, and every bone in her body, as it seemed, dislocated.

"Oh, what a silly I've been!" she wailed despairingly, and then she fainted.

It was not a lonely road, fortunately, and she was soon found, and taken home. The doctor was sent for, and enjoined by Mr. Buller on his departure to come yet again in the evening; and on coming downstairs after his second visit he found Mr. Buller hanging about in the hall. The doctor did not wait to be questioned.

"Going on splendidly," he said cheerily. "Feverish to-night, of course. But with a broken arm and a very nasty sprained ankle that's only to be expected."

For a man whose sentiments towards his wife are of an eminently philosophical nature, Mr. Buller was looking extraordinarily pale and wretched. He drew a quick sigh of satisfaction; then he said, with an air of stern superiority which ill disguised an undertone of ferocious vindictiveness:

"Wretched things, these bicycles! I've always said so." Then he added: "Is there any reason why I shouldn't see my wife? Would it do her any harm, I mean?"

The doctor screwed up his lips doubtfully.

"Well," he said, "no, hardly that. But she is feverish, as I said, and if she would rather be quiet—why, her wishes must be respected, you know."

"Confound it!" ejaculated the husband, and wheeling round he stood staring into the fire.

"Going out to-morrow?" inquired Dr. Willoughby, as he drew on his gloves. The hounds were to meet next day.

"I don't know."

"I should, if I were you," was the answer. "There's

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nothing to be anxious about in your wife's condition, and—she's better quiet, you know."

A gloomy man was Mr. Buller, to judge from his appearance as he sat in his smoking-room that night, and a gloomy man was he as he came down next morning. He had been to Mrs. Buller's door and had been sternly denied admittance.

He pulled himself together, however, at the meet, and answered the numerous inquiries after his wife with an off-hand nonchalance which did him credit.

There was a long interval of standing about by the cover, and Mr. Buller's mare, a young one, could not stand it. When they got away eventually she bolted, rushed at a fence, missed it, and came down heavily.

It was Dr. Willoughby who undertook to break the news of her husband's accident to Mrs. Buller. She was more feverish that afternoon and dreadfully depressed, but he set about his task with the slightest possible circumlocution.

"Well, Mrs. Buller," he said, "you're not to have the sick list all to yourself, after all. Horses, it seems, can play tricks as well as bicycles."

Mrs. Buller turned her head sharply. She was a good deal bruised, and there was little else that she could turn.

"What do you mean?" she demanded, as the colour rushed into her woe-begone face. "Not George?" Then, as she read assent in the doctor's face, she turned white to her lips. "Oh!" she gasped, with a sudden change of tone. "He's not hurt badly?"

"Hurt badly? No, of course not," returned the doctor cheerily; "a very neatly fractured leg, that's all—a companion to your arm. Nothing to faint about, I assure you."

"I'm not going to faint," declared Mrs. Buller; indeed, a considerable amount of colour had come back to her cheeks, and her eyes were dancing. "Poor old boy! I'm dreadfully sorry."

Her voice gave a curiously different meaning to the words. "I know what horrid pain it is, don't I? But I've always told him that horses were quite as—I mean, I've always told him that you run great risks with horses. How did it happen, doctor? Is he pretty comfortable? Is there anything I have for my arm he would like? Take him some of those grapes, will you? He'll be so thirsty."

During the weeks that followed, the respective attendants on Mr. and Mrs. Buller had a very busy time of it. Each patient took quite an extraordinary interest in the symptoms and progress of the other, and each was, of course, confined to his or her room.

The sprained ankle made progress quicker than the broken limbs. When Mrs. Buller was able to be moved to a sofa, Mr. Buller being still in his bed, Dr. Willoughby suggested that Mrs. Buller should be wheeled into his room and pay him a little visit.

"I dare say he's very dull, poor thing!" she said. "I don't know that there is any reason why I should not go to-day."

"I don't know that there is," said Dr. Willoughby. So that afternoon there was great activity in both the sick rooms. Mr. Buller's nurse had to arrange flowers, to put away this, to straighten that and to shake up the cushions of the arm chair a dozen times. Mrs. Buller's nurse had to change her patient's dressing gown twice, and her maid was requisitioned to do her hair. And at about 4 o'clock a knock came at Mr. Buller's door, and Mrs. Buller appeared, leaning on a stick and escorted by her nurse. She was received by the nurse and established with much circumstance in the arm chair prepared for her reception.

"I'm awfully glad to see you," said Mr. Buller, with constrained politeness. He was rather pathetic in his enforced recumbency, and he was looking very white and thin. "You must have had a horrid time."

"Pretty well," she said; "and so have you, I'm afraid."

"Willoughby talks of sending me to Bournemouth," said Mr. Buller.

The conversation had so far been characterised by the utmost nonchalance and composure, each party having steadily avoided a glance in the direction of the other; but at this juncture he, with a self-confidence entirely unjustified by events, turned politely in his wife's direction. She looked round at the same moment; their eyes met, and—it was all over!

"Alice, my little girl, how white you look!"

"Oh, George, my old darling, how thin you are!"

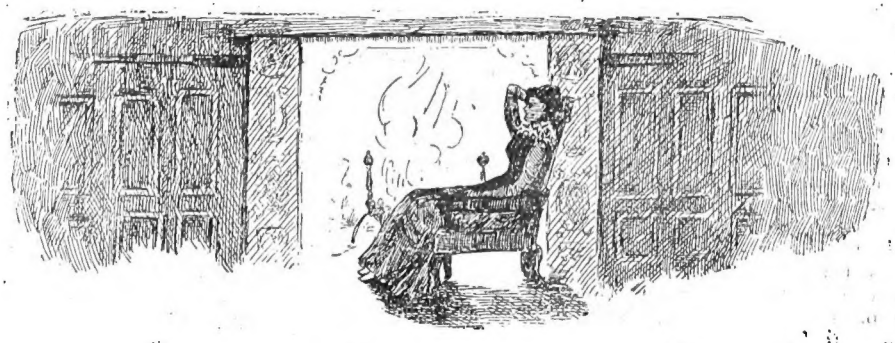
The ejaculations were simultaneous, and before they had died away, Mrs. Buller, with a little hop and the assistance of the table, had reached the sofa, and had subsided on to the floor with her face buried on her husband's breast.

"Oh, George," she cried, "you were quite right; bicycles are horrid things, and so are horses. Oh, George, you might have been killed!"

"I might, darling!" he said incoherently. "You were quite right, too, Alice, dearest; it's been the very deuce of a time! Do you know how long it is since you really kissed me?"

They went to Bournemouth together, and each was so busy superintending the complete recovery of the other that they quite forgot to be up-to-date, and are no more a strictly Society couple.

MARGARET HUME.



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BAB-EL-HAWIYAT.

Lounging on a bench under the tall date palms in the market-place of Hammam-el-Enf, I smoked a rank *cherbli* in dreamy laziness. The day was dying; the blazing African sun sank, flooding the broad Bay of Tunis with its blood-red afterglow, and the giant palms cast their long shadows over the hot, sun-blanched stones.

There are no half lights in Northern Africa; all is either glaring brilliance or sombre shadow. Little twilight is there in that land of mosques and marabouts; night follows the death of day with astonishing rapidity. Even while I sat darkness crept on; the squatting, chattering crowd of white burnoused Moors and Arabs and red-fezzed negroes had dispersed, and the sun-baked little village seemed almost deserted.

Suddenly the white figure of an Arab woman glided slowly and ghostlike from the deep shadow of the ilexes. Like all others of her sex, she was enshrouded in a *haick*, and the lower portion of her face was hidden by her thick white veil, only a magnificent pair of black sparkling eyes and a forehead upon which rows of gold sequins tinkled being visible.

Halting for a few seconds she stared at me as if in surprise, then in soft musical Arabic gave me peace, exclaiming:

"Sadness dwelleth in the heart of the Roumi. Of a verity thou art not more sad than I," and, sighing, she drew her *adjar* closer across her face and was about to pass on.

"Sad, art thou?" I exclaimed, in the same language, surprised that she should address me, an officer of chasseurs. In the dim light I could distinguish that her hose were of the finest white silk, that her tiny shoes were Paris made and of patent leather, and that the hand which held the *haick* about her was loaded with valuable rings. "Loosen thy tongue's strings, O one of beauty," I said gallantly. "Tell me, why speakest thou unto me, an infidel; why unhappiness hath fallen upon thee."

"Ah, no!" she replied, in a hoarse half-whisper, glancing round in apparent fear. "My people must not observe me having speech with thee. Ah, Allah may bring one of us certainty before to-morrow, and—if thou wouldst only help me!"

"What service can I render?" I asked quickly, well aware that the fact of her speaking to a European in a public place was of itself a very grave offence in the eyes of the fanatical Aíssáwà. The barrier between Al-Islâm and Christianity in Tunis is still unsurmountable.

"First thou must trust me," she said frankly. "I am called Fathma Khadidja; and thy name—already I know it. It is dangerous for me to hold converse here with you. Let thy footsteps follow mine. Come, and may Allah, who knoweth the innermost parts of the breasts of men, shower upon thee bounteous blessings," and she turned and started off with that peculiar waddling gait of Arab women.

I hesitated. If really in distress, it was strange that she had not called upon her own people to help her, instead of requesting an infidel and a stranger to render assistance.

No, I decided not to go, and sat watching her receding figure cross the market-place where slaves were sold even within recent years, and disappear in the shadow of the mosque.

In an hour I had forgotten the mysterious Fathma and her troubles, and returned to Tunis.

Next afternoon, as I entered my quarters in the Kasbah my Arab servant handed me a note. As I tore it open it emitted an odour of geranium, the favourite perfume of the harem. Having read the three long lines of sprawly Arabic characters it contained, I placed the missive in my pocket and turned away. If I valued my life, I was to meet Khadidja that evening. Was that a threat or a warning? During the remainder of that day I lounged outside the cafés and pondered deeply. For hours I ruminated over absinthe and mazagran, cassis and bock; and, after much consideration, I at length resolved to keep the appointment and ascertain the extent of the mysterious danger of which she wrote.

At the appointed hour I awaited her at a secluded spot outside the Bab Alewa. The clock of the Mosque of Sici Mahrez close by struck solemnly, and as the last sound died away I heard the *frou-frou* of feminine garments, as a shrouded figure advanced to me.

"Ah, so thou hast kept thine appointment, O Roumi!"

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she exclaimed, stretching forth to me a soft, white hand. "Thou thinkest because I believe in the One, and in Mahomet, his Prophet, that I am unworthy thy regard; that I am not be trusted, eh?" Then she laughed lightly, adding, "Come let us fly on the wings of haste. I want to have serious speech with thee upon a matter that affecteth us both."

Without replying, I walked on beside her, wondering whether she were ugly or beautiful. Crossing a deserted garden, we passed out to where two asses were tethered, and mounting them rode away into the darkness. I remember that we went through several villages, and at length came to a larger place built upon the low cliffs, where a number of spacious flat-roofed houses overlooked the sea.

Suddenly she dismounted before a low arched door in one of the great square, inartistic, whitewashed residences, and placed her fingers upon her lips indicative of silence. Taking a key that was suspended round her neck, she unlocked the door and led me into a dark passage so thickly carpeted that my sword trailed noiselessly as she guided me onward.

Once I caught sight of a spacious *patio*, rendered cool by a splashing fountain and green with many leaves; then through two small chambers we passed, until we came to a closed door, which she opened, and I found myself in a spacious, dimly-illumined apartment, decorated in quaint arabesques of dark crimson and dull gold. Everything was rich and luxurious. The air was heavy with sensuous odours rising in a thin blue column from the gold perfuming pan. On the floor lay costly Arab rugs, and a couple of lion skins were thrown down on each side of the centre mat. A *derbouka* and a *ginkri*, fashioned from a tortoiseshell, lay thrown aside, and from a magnificent hanging lamp of gold, a soft, mellow light was diffused, though scarcely sufficient to show the heavy draperies that concealed the walls.

"Rest thee a moment, and I will return," my mysterious veiled guide said; and then, drawing aside some of the silken hangings she disappeared through a door that had been hidden.

With hands behind me, I slowly wandered round, wondering what apartment of the house this was, when some half-finished embroidery that had apparently been tossed hurriedly aside upon a coffee stool of inlaid pearl and silver caught my eye. That told me the truth. My heart gave a sudden bound. I was in the harem!

A French novel lay open on one of the little tables. I took it up, and, as I stood in wonderment, a movement behind me caused me to turn, and then I beheld the most beautiful woman I had ever gazed upon. She was not more than two-and-twenty, with a complexion fresh as a northener's, features that were perfect, pretty lips that parted in a glad smile, and dress that was the most gorgeous I had ever seen.

The ugly *haick* had been replaced by a jacket of palest leaf-green brocaded silk, beneath which showed a rose-pink velvet vest; and, in the place of the baggy trousers, she wore the *serroual*, or wide trousers, of silken gauze. Her tiny, bare feet were thrust into slippers of rose velvet; on her head was set jauntily a little crimson skull cap embroidered with seed pearls; and her *fouta*, or sash, was of a tricolor-striped silk richly ornamented with gold. Upon her bare arms and ankles diamonds flashed and sparkled with a thousand fires, and bangles jingled as she walked. She dazzled and fascinated me.

With an apology for having left me, she sank slowly among her cushions with graceful abandon, at the same

time loosing one of her slippers, and motioning me to a seat near her.

"Thou thinkest it strange," she said, "perhaps even thou art angry, that I have brought thee hither alone unto this gilded cage. But I must speak with thee—to warn thee;" and her dimpled chin rested upon her dainty palm as she, with seriousness, looked straight into my eyes.

"To warn me! Of what?"

"Thou art threatened," she answered slowly. "Thou wilt, perhaps, remember that a month ago thou wert in Kabylia; and left Fort National for Tizi Ouzou. Thou hadst the careless indifference that youth giveth, and, no doubt, thou wert prepared to meet Eblis himself if he promised an adventure. On that occasion with whom didst thou travel?"

"I journeyed in company of a wealthy man of thy people, who was returning from the wine market."

"True, O friend," she replied. "A week ago thou didst describe the journey in the *Moniteur de l'Algerie* and ridiculed thy companion. See here—!" and she stretched forth her hand and took up a paper containing the article in which I had treated the journey in a comic vein, and had denounced in no measured terms the religious bigotry of Al-Islam.

"Thou art a *homard;* and that man," she continued, "hath sworn upon the book of Everlasting Will to kill thee!"

"How dost thou know this, O thou whose face is rivalled only by the sun?" I asked quickly.

"Because—because the man thou hast ridiculed is my husband!" she replied, rising and adding wildly: "Because I overheard the villainous scheme that he hath planned with his brother to take thy life, and at the risk of mine own honour I determined to save thee. Allah alone knoweth how terrible is my life alone in this place with my servants, bound to a fierce, brutal man who loveth me not, and upon whose brow the Câfer hath set seal."

"Is thine husband neglectful, then?" I asked, noticing the poignant sorrow that in that moment seemed to have crushed her.

"Alas! yes. Whithersoever I go the bane of Sajin seemeth upon me," she sighed, passing her slim, bejewelled hand slowly across her white forehead. Tears welled in her brilliant eyes, as she added, in a broken voice:

"I am lost—lost to all, soulless, uncared for, unloved!"

She hesitated a moment thoughtfully, glancing at her own bejewelled hands and then at mine. With a quick movement she drew from one of her fingers a curious ring of silver, round which were Arabic characters in gold.

"See!" she cried, as if a sudden thought had occurred

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to her. "Take this and wear it. It is my talisman, and as long as it is upon thy finger no harm can befall thee. It beareth the stamp of 'La Belle,' and will preserve thee in health and guard thee in the hour of tribulation."

She took my hand in hers, and drawing my own signet ring from my finger, replaced it by her strange-looking talisman, afterwards slipping my own ring upon her hand.

A sob escaped her.

"We have exchanged rings!" she exclaimed brokenly, looking up into my face with tear-stained, world-weary eyes. Then, clutching her bare breast as if to still the throbbing of her heart, she cried: "When —when thou art far away thou wilt, peradventure, sometimes gaze upon mine, and remember that a service was once rendered thee by a poor, unhappy woman—thou wilt recollect that her name is Fathma Khadidja—that —that—ah; forgive me, or I am mad! mad!—that Fathma Khadidja *loveth thee!*"

Raising my hand to her warm, sensuous lips, she kissed it passionately with all the fire and ardour of the Child of the Sun. Then, releasing me, she tottered back, panting; and sank upon her silken divan, with her face buried in her hands, sobbing as if her heart would break.

"*Cama ta f ákal kathêlik tolâ ki*," I said, quoting at random from the Koran. "Come, come," I added, sympathetically, sinking down beside her, tenderly stroking her long, silky tresses. "Despair not. The One Worthy of Praise knowest how thou sufferest, and will give unto thee strength in the hour of thy need, and bring thee into the shadow of the great lote tree."

"Ah! Thy mouth uttereth pearls of wisdom," she cried. "But I have touched thee, an infidel, and am accursed by Allah. I care nought for the future, for already I am forsaken, already I have tasted of the bitter fruit of Al-Zakkum, and am doomed to the torture of Al-Hâwiyat, the place prepared for the evil-doers."

Then, raising her face to mine, with an intense look of passionate love, she said in a soft, sibilant whisper:

"Once only! Kiss me once! Then thou mayest go, and never shall we meet—never."

Her beautiful head fell upon my shoulder, and her hair—soft as spun silk—strayed across my face. For a moment her lips met mine in a hot, passionate kiss, a caress enough to make any man's head reel.

"I love thee," she whispered, in low, half-frightened tones, as she clung to me and would not allow me to release myself. "Unseen by thee I have watched thee many moons, and to-night I have brought thee thither to tell thee—to confess to thee my secret."

I tried to draw my lingering lips from hers, but with the fire of love gleaming in her brilliant eyes she gripped me with a force I should not have supposed her capable of. "Stay," she whispered. "Without thee the canker-worm of love eateth away mine heart."

* * * * *

Next day inspection duty took me to the Haras Fortress, away behind the hills of Ahmar, and the voices of the *muddenin* were already calling the faithful for the *maghrib* when I re-entered the Kasbah. Hassan, my man, was playing *damma* in the courtyard, but rose quietly, saluted, and told me that he had taken to my quarters a small package which had been left by the negro servant that had brought the letter on the previous day.

Could it, I wondered, be a present from Khadidja? Rushing in, I found on my table a small box packed in white paper and secured with black seals. Eagerly I tore away the wrappings and opened it.

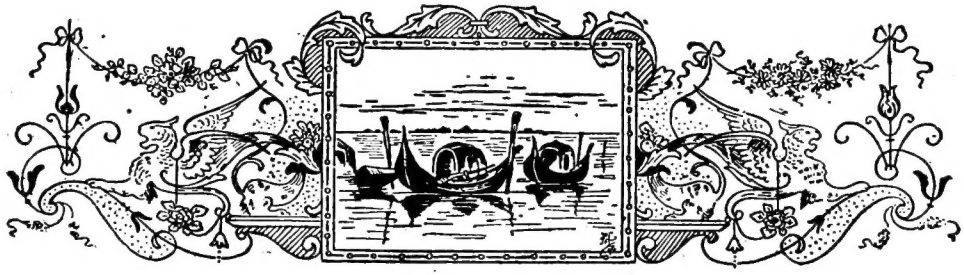
As I did so a shriek of horror escaped me. I fell back awe-stricken at the sight presented. Inside a satin-lined bracelet case, bearing the name of a Paris jeweller, on a piece of pale-blue velvet, there was stretched a human finger that had been roughly hacked off at the joint. It lay, stiff, white and cold, with the blood coagulated where the blunt knife had jagged the flesh. The finger was a woman's—slim, well-formed, with the nail stained by henna. It was loaded with costly rings, which scintillated in the golden ray of sunset that strayed into the room and fell across them, and as I looked, breathless in amazement, I saw among the ornaments my own signet ring.

A scrap of paper that fluttered to the ground bore the words, scrawled in Arabic character. "From the husband of Fathma Khadidja!"

That same night I was pacing the deck of the mail steamer bound for Marseilles, watching the glimmering lights of La Goulette fading at the stern. In fear and trepidation I took the hideous souvenir of unreciprocated love, and when unobserved, cast it far away from me into the dark rolling waters.

Perhaps there, deep in its lonely hiding place, it met the white, dead thing of which it once formed a part—the body of the matchless daughter of the sun whose wondrous hair enmeshed me, whose full, red lips of frailty held me like a magnet, shackling me to the inevitable, powerless and entranced. Who can tell?

Elsac Marden.



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TOLD IN THE INDIAN BAZAAR.

By H. HUNTER.

In writing these stories, the purpose of the author is to give the average reader a fairly accurate notion of the sort o tales which are told daily and nightly in the bazaars and villages of India, on the Temple steps, and at the bathing stairs, and which are listened to with unquestioning faith by millions of people.

II.—THE APPLE FROM PARADISE.

NOT far from the holy city of Benarès, in the reign of the good King Shalmanazar, there lived a poor water-carrier and his wife.

Every morning from his twentieth year till now, when he was past sixty, Hurree Das, after performing his own ablutions in the Sacred River, had filled his skins from the Holy Stream and carried the precious fluid to those less fortunate individuals, who, unable themselves to bathe in the purifying current, were yet desirous when they left their earthly bodies behind them, of gaining for the new ones a comfortable seat in the Pillared Halls of Indra.

Those who had money paid Hurree Das for his services in coin; those who had none paid him in prayers.

It was "pay what you please" with Hurree. He never grumbled. Whatever people offered him he accepted without clamour or criticism. He never refused money, he never objected to prayers. Money was handy, certainly, but prayers were not to be despised. So Hurree went up and down the city and through the villages beyond the walls, crying "Ganges water! Ganges water!" refusing no man a share because he was poor, and cheerfully accepting as payment a prayer when his customer hadn't a *pice*.*

"Money," he would say, "is only for to-day; and man, who lives but one day at a time, has enough if he can buy grain for the present. But prayers are for to-morrow, and the profit of them will endure long, as the undying tree in Indra's Paradise shall continue to shower its blessings upon the happy souls who have found a shelter beneath its branches."

In the philosophy of Hurree Das, money was merely for current expenses, while prayer was treasure laid up against future contingencies. And like the wise son of a prudent father, Hurree did not disdain to insure himself against ill-fortune in the next world by investing with Bhugwán all the prayers he received in this. They were *hoondees*—drafts upon Heaven, possessing an actual value, and would be duly honoured as opportunity arrived. About this Hurree never had a doubt.

Now, a day came, when Hurree, grown old and feeble, was no longer able to go down to Holy Mother Gungá and fill his water-skins with water. When, indeed, his voice turning again to childish treble had become weak and worn, and quite unequal to crying "Ganges water," through the crowded bazaars and teeming alleys of the Temple City—when he could only sit at the door of his humble cottage and wonder why he had been born.

Senatbee, his wife, had that morning husked the last handful of rice in the grain-sack; there wasn't as much ghee* left in the jar as would cover the stone in a mango; and, of salt, no more than two pinches.

Hurree Das and his wife sat in the door of his grass-thatched dwelling in the cool of the day; and the woman said: "Surely, husband, it were better to trust ourselves to the quiet bosom of Mother Gunga, who will bear us peacefully into the Halls of Dazzling Light, than to sit with hands idle waiting for the grim messengers of Yama."

"Can you be sure, wife," answered the man, "that Vishnoo has no further need of us? Think you, he would allow us to continue to live if he had no more work for us to do?"

"Live!" cried the woman. "Call you this living? Dying is what I call it—dying by slow inches. Really, husband, I begin to suspect that you must have been a desperately wicked character in your previous existence, or this misery would not have been permitted to overtake you in the present."

As she spake the words there appeared before them as if springing from the ground a being, of human shape, truly, but of a grace and beauty to which poor humanity could never hope to aspire.

Darting at the woman a look which caused her to bite her tongue in remorse for having uttered her thoughts, the Celestial visitor advanced towards Hurree, who, transported with awe and wonder, had risen to receive him.

"Be not afraid, O water-carrier of the Ganges. I am a messenger sent by Brahma to tell thee that the prayers of the pious have prevailed. Heaven cannot remain in debt to a mortal. Behold this apple, which Brahma bids me leave with thee. It grew upon the first and greatest of all trees. The tree which stands in the centre of the garden of the gods, in Indra's Paradise; and gives to all who ask whatever thing they need. Behold the bloom of Heaven is still upon the fruit. It was plucked but this instant, and upon him who eats thereof it will confer the blessing of everlasting life. Take it, O man beloved of Brahma, and thy happiness shall be as thou understandest thy duty."

The next moment the messenger was gone, and Hurree Das found himself alone with his wife, and staring, open-eyed, at the apple in his hand.

Without thinking, he raised the fruit to his lips, exposing his toothless old jaws, and was just about to make a bite at the golden-hued produce of the Celestial tree, when Senatbee stopped him.

"And, pray, husband," said she, "what would be the good of everlasting life to a poor old useless fellow like you? Are you so much in love with misery that you would prolong it through the ages of eternity? Go to!

"You were a man, Hurree Das, when I married you; but methinks you are now little better than a fool. Everlasting life is a sorry boon to offer such as we.

* The smallest Indian coin.

* Clarified butter.

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Now, if he had told us to divide the apple, and promised us everlasting youth with powers of enjoyment continually renewed—delights that never wearied and pleasures that never palled—it would have been something like a tale. But to come all the way from Paradise to offer us what we'd rather be without——

"Well, to be plain, husband, I don't believe Brahma would have done it. Depend upon it, for all his soft speech and good looks, that messenger came from the other place."

"Wisdom is with thee, O wife!" exclaimed Hurree, poking doubtfully at the apple. "Thy words have turned my liver to water. Say, now, O wisest amongst women, what is thy word concerning it? In this matter I will be guided according as thou speakest. Protection of Heaven! It's a mercy I haven't bitten it."

And with that he threw the apple from him, as if it were a live coal that burnt his hand. But Senatbee, picking it up, rebuked him for his folly, bidding him not to waste anything which could be sold for money.

"How it may be in the next birth," said she, "we don't know; but in this, money buys everything, and nothing can be had without money."

"I really begin to believe you're right, wife," said the poor man. "Praise be to Heaven for giving me such a woman!"

Now when Senatbee perceived the effect which her words had upon her husband, she rejoiced and was satisfied. She had no notion of letting him eat the apple himself, and so deprive her of any share in whatever virtue it might possess. But now that she held possession of it, and he was willing to follow her instructions, she had another tale for him. Well, he would be ready to swallow that, too, and fifty more after it—now he had made over to her the confidence which he had lost in himself. Women always could twist men round their fingers, if they managed them rightly.

"Upon consideration, husband," said Senatbee, "I think it's just possible that Indra's apple may have been sent thee as a reward for pious services in the past. It would pain me very much to have to think that that fair-spoken stranger was no better than a servant of Safed, the great demon. And now I remember that he said, 'thy happiness would be as thou understoodest thy duty,' which confirms me in my opinion that he really was a messenger from Brahma, for the messages from the gods mostly do have those little tags tacked on to them."

"Wonderful woman!" cried Hurree Das. "Why did I never consult thee before?"

"Thy duty," continued Senatbee, "is plain. Make the best use of the gift the gods have provided. To eat it yourself would be selfish, foolish, and wicked. Nobody wants old men to live longer than they can decently find excuse for doing so. Now, money is always useful—to old and young alike. It is impossible to do without it here; and it would be no bad thing to have a little handy in case we should require it hereafter. One can never tell what may happen on that journey, and it might be awkward if we couldn't pay the toll. Therefore, husband, my counsel to thee is, take the apple to the palace, the King is old, but the Regent, Prince Ramatavi, is young; haply he will give much gold to possess this inestimable gift."

"Live for ever, O Prince!"

So, next day, Hurree went off to the palace, and standing before the Prince, told him all things concerning the wonderful fruit that he held in his hand.

"Live for ever, O Prince!" he cried, bowing his forehead to the dust, "and upon thy servant Hurree Das, bestow a little of the wealth which is in the coffers of the King."

Then, Prince Ramatavi, leading the water-carrier to the door of the Treasury, bade him enter and take as much gold as he desired.

But the poor man, having no pockets in his **dhótee*, was at a loss how to carry it. However, he filled his ears and his mouth and his nostrils with the precious metal; and went to his house—unsatisfied. When he had nothing, Hurree wanted nothing; now that he had more than sufficient, he was disposed to grumble.

Having got rid of the water-carrier, Prince Ramatavi rushed off in haste to his *zenana*—the apartment of his wives—and summoned Shurfan, his best-beloved.

* Waistcloth.

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"Light of my eyes!" he cried. "Joy of my heart! Eat this beautiful fruit, fresh from the tree in Indra's Paradise; eat, dear one, and live for ever—everlastingly young, everlasting lovely, everlastingly charming."

Now, as, from her first appearance on the scene, woman has ever been a creature of a strange perversity; always thinking lightly of what she possesses, and hankering after what is withheld; so the Princess, although she had for her husband the very best of good fellows, must needs lavish all the love of her idle soul upon Maha-pali, the Minister of War.

"Ah!" thought she, while she thanked her husband prettily for his handsome gift, "what a fine opportunity to convince that laggard, Maha-pali of the sincerity of my devotion," and, slipping into the Audience Chamber after her husband had departed, she sent for the minister, and with many demonstrations of tenderness and affection, presented him with the apple.

Maha-pali had no love to give the Princess in return for all she spent upon him; his heart was a prisoner to Lakha with the antelope eyes, one of the pretty Princess's maids of honour. And to Lakha, as soon as he met her he offered the apple as a token of his love.

Lakha, little minx, was delighted. She gave him kisses and good words, as many as he asked for, and having dismissed him with promises enough to fill a bullock-waggon, went off to seek an audience of the Prince.

"Now," said she, "I shall be sure to win his affection; and after we're properly married, see if I don't open his eyes about the Princess he's so very sweet on."

Prince Ramatavi accepted the apple, as if he had seen it then only for the first time; and bestowing upon Lakha a princely present, bade her return to her mistress and ask her to be ready to receive him in half an hour.

Now the Prince was not quite so ignorant of what went on at the court as pretty Lakha supposed; and the return to him of Indra's apple, confirmed all his worst suspicions. Disgusted with the world and loathing womankind, he determined to abandon the palace for the jungle, where at least he would be able to distinguish his friends from his foes. But first he would execute judgment on the wicked Princess. Entering straightway the apartments of the women, he caused Shurfan to be summoned before him.

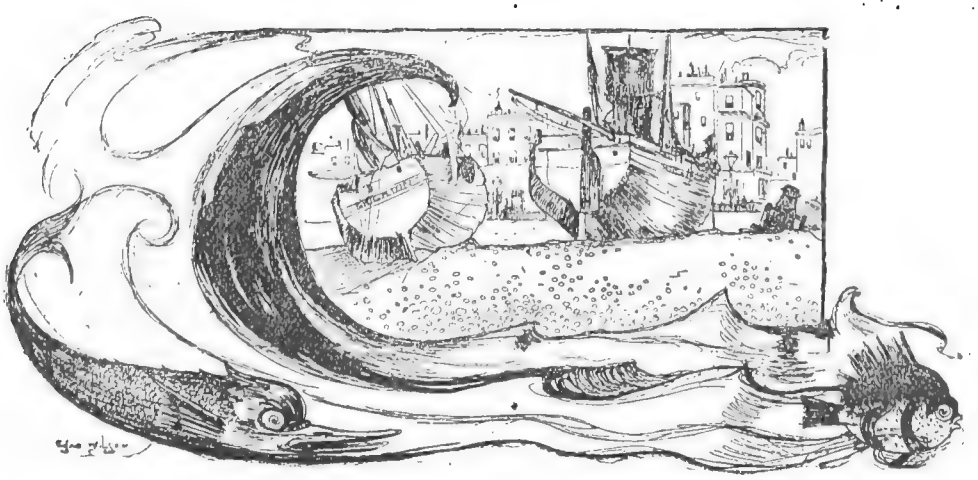
"What has become, Princess," he asked, "of the apple from Paradise which I gave unto thee?"

And the unabashed Shurfan, dissembling much, replied:

"I have obeyed the command of my lord and eaten it."

Then Prince Ramatavi, producing the fruit, gave orders for her instant beheading; and having first washed the apple carefully in Ganges water, ate it himself.

From that hour the Prince disappeared from the palace; but a Jogi who, men say, was the Prince, lives in the jungles of Oudh even to this day, death having no power over him.



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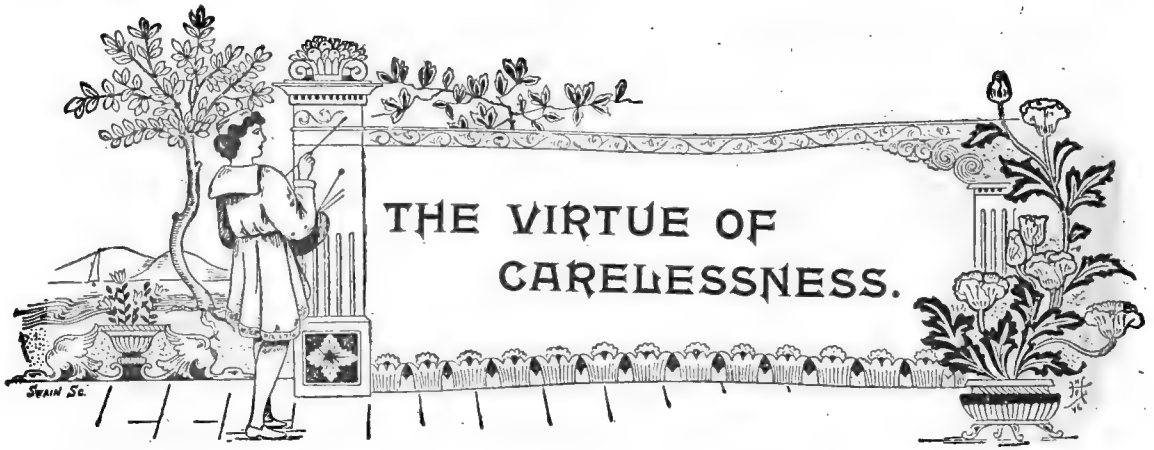

IF my wife has a failing, it is lack of reverence. She doesn't recognise those property rights which should inhere to the personal belongings of a husband. I heard that expression uttered by a fellow with a chronic distaste for work, whose wife supported him by dress-making. I didn't tell Minnie where I got the expression when I quoted it to her, but she immediately said:

"That sounds like Bill Sinks."

Then she laughed. My wife has a very musical laugh.

I think that I was mildly reprimanding her at the time for mislaying the gimlet. I'm the most particular fellow you ever saw about keeping everything in its place. When I want a tool of any kind, I want to know just where to lay my hands on it. It's a kind of religion with me, and it hurts me terribly to find things in confusion. That's where my wife's lack of reverence comes in. She has no respect for the eleventh commandment: "Order is Heaven's first law."

Well, now that you understand my wife's failing—I'll admit it's her greatest one—I'll go on with the story with which it is connected.

One day last July, Jim Outhwick came into the station just as I was closing up to go to supper. Jim was the paymaster at the Vulcan mills, and a right good fellow.

"Hello, Joe," he said. "All alone?"

"Yes," I said. "What's up?"

He flung his canvas bag on the table and said:

"I must go down the road to-night to Ashbury. There's talk of a strike among the miners, and I've got to be there first thing in the morning. I'm to offer to pay off the disaffected ones and make a big show of money. That's a bluff that generally tells. The men'll make up their minds the company can't be intimidated, and they'll get into harness again. There's £5,000 in that bag, Joe."

I glanced at the bag on the table and looked back at Jim.

"What did you bring it here for?" I asked.

"That's easily explained," he answered, sitting down. "I got the word to start for Ashbury just half an hour ago. The money was up in a hurry and I didn't have time to go home. I couldn't very well stay at the mill and I wouldn't go to the tavern. So I just thought I'd come down here and get you to stay with me until the night goods train comes along. She's due at 9.30, isn't she?"

"9.35," I answered. "But I'm just off to supper."

"Oh, that's all right," he said. "I feel safe enough here. I'm armed to the teeth, you know, and there wouldn't be any danger until after dark. But you'll come back and keep me company, won't you?"

"I will if Minnie lets me off," I said. "I'm booked for a game of cribbage with her after supper."

There was a stout old safe in the corner of the office that had nothing in it but blank way-bills and reports. I unlocked it and tossed the canvas bag inside.

"There," I said, as I thrust my bunch of keys in my coat pocket, "that makes it a little safer."

I thought Jim looked a bit dubious over this precaution, but he laughed and said:

"All right, my boy; I'll make myself comfortable until you come back."

Minnie didn't like the idea of my going, but I told her Jim counted on me. I didn't say a word about the money, however; I knew it would worry her, and to tell the truth, it worried me a little. I was sorry Jim had brought it there, and I didn't like his talk about precautions.

Well, after supper I went out to see if the dog was all right—I've got the finest mastiff in all Lancashire—and when I came back Minnie called to me from the sitting-room:

"Just a minute, Joe. I'm writing a note for Hattie."

Hattie is the wife of a telegraph clerk, and I knew that Minnie wanted me to leave it at the station, where he could get it in the morning. It was quite a number of minutes, however, before she came out with the note and my coat. It was so warm I had left it off before supper.

"Hadn't you better let the dog go with you, Joe?" she asked, as she helped me with my coat.

"No, no," I said, laughing. "He'll stay at home and take care of you. I'll put the lamp in the window, though, so you'll know I'm all right."

"Mind," she said, "I'll watch for it, and if it isn't there, I'll come down after you."

I'm stationmaster at Y——. Our line is what's called the old line, and traffic on it is mostly light goods. At night the station is deserted, there being no business for telegraph clerk or booking clerk.

I found Jim with his heels on the desk puffing away at a good cigar.

"Not an alarm," he said, in his joking way; "not even a mouse."

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We chatted away for an hour or more, when Jim suddenly put down his feet and yawned heavily.

"Joe," he said, "if you don't mind I'll go out and take a little stroll."

"Go," I said; "but mind you're not gone long."

I went back and sat down. The more I thought about the money the more I didn't like the idea. What business had Jim to go away and leave all the responsibility with me? Of course he didn't leave it all with me, but he left altogether too big a share.

As I sat there grumbling, a low tap on the window overlooking the platform attracted my attention. I looked up. That side of the building was in the shadow, but I could see a man's face against the pane.

"Joe," said someone outside.

I supposed it might be one of the permanent way hands and stepped across the room.

"What is it?" I called.

"Open the window, Joe," said the voice.

I pushed it up a little way.

"Is that you, Jerry?" I called.

There was no response. I put my head through the opening and looked up and down the line. Nobody was in sight. Just then I heard a slight noise behind me. I drew in my head. Something seemed to crash into my brain. A flash of blazing light blinded me. Then all was dark.

When I came to I was tied in my chair, my head was sore and wet, and two men with stripes of black cloth across their faces were looking down at me.

"He's all right," said the shorter one.

The tall man nodded.

"Get the keys," he said in a queer, hoarse voice.

The shorter man felt in my pockets.

"Not here," he cried.

"They must be," said the tall man, in his hoarse voice.

"I tell you they are not. Bring the lamp."

The tall man took the lamp from the window ledge and came closer to me. But the search was in vain. The tall man placed the lamp on the table, while the short man put a revolver to my ear.

"Come," he said, "where are those keys?"

My head was beginning to clear a little. I saw it all. My wife had taken the keys from my pocket because it was her way, and because she thought I had no further use for them until the morning.

"He must have left the keys at home," said the tall man hurriedly. "Here, give him a sheet of paper and let him write a note to his wife asking for them."

The short man looked up sharply.

"I'll get them," said the tall man.

They pulled the table up to me and spread out a scrap of paper. The short man loosened the rope and let my right hand go free. I reached to my vest pocket half blindly and drew out my pencil, still in a daze. I tried to put my wife's name on the sheet. The pencil refused to make a mark. I looked at it. It was dull and horribly haggled about the point. I pride myself on the fine point I put to my pencils.

Again I comprehended that my wife had borrowed that very pencil to write the note to the operator's wife. I tried to scribble with the blunted thing.

"Confound you, hurry!" growled the short ruffian.

I showed the pencil point. With an exclamation of anger the short man drew out a heavy handled knife and swiftly sharpened the pencil. As he passed it back my wandering vision was caught by the lamp on the table. Heavens! it was no longer in the window! As this thought struck me, I looked towards the ledge and saw there a white, scared face pressed against the pane. It was my wife.

"Write!" growled the ruffian.

My only thought was to gain time. I knew my wife was there. I knew she would bring help.

I took the pencil in my nervous fingers. As I did so a low growl caught my ear. It caught the ears of the villains too. The short man dropped his knife on the table and turned towards the door with his revolver extended.

The tall man drew himself up against the wall.

"It's the dog," he hoarsely whispered.

"Don't miss it, Jack."

I saw the door tremble a little, I saw the short villain's arms rise and my fingers closed on the handle of the knife he had just dropped. Then, as the door slowly opened, I drew back my arm and thrust wildly at the man in front of me.

Something yellow flew through the doorway. There was a wild scream, a heavy fall, and I lapsed into unconsciousness again.

When I came round I was in bed at home, with Minnie bending over me.

"It's all right, Joe," she murmured. "They've got them both locked up safe and sound, and the money is all right, and the mill directors have given you £200 of it."

"And Jim?" I asked.

"Jim!" she cried. "Why, Jim was the tall man. It was all his plot to steal the money and throw the blame on you. And if I hadn't taken your keys—don't scold—they'd have had the money, and if it hadn't been for the lead pencil I dulled—the man you stabbed told the whole story—I wouldn't have got there in time with Hector. The dog almost killed Jim before I could call him away, but I'm not so sorry, because the little man says they would have killed you if you had by any chance suspected Jim's identity."

I reached out and took Minnie's hand.

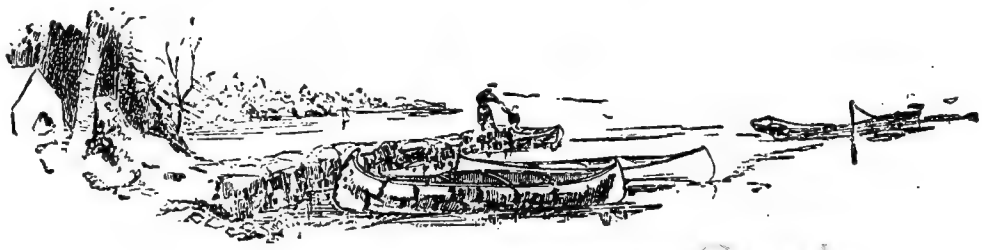
"That £200 belongs to you, dear," I said brokenly.

"Well," she answered, "if you take it, Joe, you may rest assured I'll borrow it sooner or later."

Then she put her cheek against my hand and laughed.

Then she cried.

B. M. G.



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THE FATE OF CARL BLUVEN.

A Legend of the Maelstrom.

On that wild part of the coast of Norway that stretches between Bergen and Stravanger there once lived a fisherman called Carl Bluven.

Carl was one of the poorest of all the fishermen that dwelt on that shore.

Notwithstanding his poverty, Carl was on the eve of marriage. His bride was the daughter of a woodcutter in the neighbouring forest, so that the match was pretty equal on both sides.

He dared not launch his leaky boat in such a sea, and yet, if he caught no fish, there would be nothing for supper when he should bring his wife home.

Carl walked out upon the shore and wandered along, uncertain what to do.

He at length sat down upon a shelving rock and looked out upon the sea towards the great whirlpool called the Maelstrom, of which so many fearful things were recorded.

"What riches are buried there," said Carl to himself half aloud. "What casks of butter and hams—to say nothing of gold and silver—and here am I, Carl Bluven, to be married to-morrow, and not a keg for the minister. If I had but one cask from the bottom of the Maelstrom, I would——"

But Carl did not finish the sentence. Like all the fishermen of that coast, Carl had his superstitions and his beliefs, and he looked round him rather uneasily, for he well knew that all in the Maelstrom belonged to Kahlbrannar, the tall old mariner of the whirlpool.

He was just about to return to his solitary hut, when a high crested wave, rushing through the channel beside him, bore a cask along with it and threw it among the great stones that lay between the rocks.

It proved to be the very thing he wanted—a cask of as fine butter as ever came out of Bergen and as fresh as if it had been churned a week ago.

Next morning betimes Carl Bluven was on his way to his wedding, rolling the cask before him, with the larger half of the butter in it for his marriage fee.

For some little time all went well with Carl. What with the provisions he had brought home and the remains of his butter, the newly married couple did not fare amiss, even although the fisherman rarely drew a net.

At length, however, the sausage pots stood empty, and even the Gammel Orsk cheese was reduced to a shell. As for the butter, Carl and his wife had found it so good that the cask had been empty long since.

Carl left his hut, taking his net and his oars over his shoulders, leaving Ulderwalla picking cloudberries, and, unmooring his boat, paddled out of the creek and began throwing his nets. But not a fish could he take. The sun set, and dusk began to creep over the shore. The tide had retired, so that Carl's boat was left dry a long way within water-mark, and he had to walk a dreary mile or more among the black dripping rocks that lay between him and his own dwelling.

As Carl turned away he noticed at a little distance close to the water a small boat that well he knew belonged to no fisherman of that coast. It was the very smallest boat he had ever seen, such as no seaman of Bergenhuus could keep afloat on such a sea, and the build of it, too, was the queerest he had ever beheld.

Raising his eyes from the pools of water, in which he hoped to find some floundering fish, he observed a tall figure advancing from the shore in the direction of the little boat he had seen and nearly in the same line which he was pursuing.

"A dreary night this, Carl Bluven," said the strange mariner, "and likely for a storm."

"I hope not," said Carl, not a little surprised that he should be addressed by his name.

"You hope not," said the other, with an ugly sneer. "And who, I wonder, likes better than Carl Bluven to roll a castaway cask to his cabin door?"

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"Why," returned Carl apologetically, "what Providence kindly sends 'tis not for a poor fisherman to refuse."

"You liked the butter I sent you, then?" said the strange mariner.

"You sent me?" said Carl.

But Carl's rejoiner remained without further explanation.

"Aha!" said the tall mariner, pointing out to sea in the direction of the Maelstrom. "She bears right upon it—the *Frou of Drontheim*, deeply laden! We'll meet again, Carl Bluven." And without further parley the tall, strange mariner brushed past Carl and strode hastily toward the sea.

As Carl walked toward his own house he felt almost certain that the tall mariner he had encountered was no other than Kahlbrannar. He reached the water-mark opposite to his own house, and at the same time his foot struck against a cask lying high and dry on the very spot where the other had drifted.

Carl guessed where it came from, and, rolling the cask to his own door, he was soon busy staving it and drawing out, one after another, some of the choicest white puddings and dried hams that ever left the harbour of Bergen.

Carl Bluven had a singular dream that night. He thought that he saw the little boat he had noticed that evening lying beyond the rocks at low tide, and that he walked out to examine it, and, being curious to know whether he could steer so very small a boat, he stepped into it, and, leaning forward, hoisted the little sail at the bow, the only one it had, and when he turned round to take the helm he saw the tall mariner sitting as steersman.

Not a word was spoken, till after a little while the steersman, pointing forward, said:

"There she is, as I told you, the *Frou of Drontheim*, bearing right upon the Maelstrom, as my name is Kahlbrannar; she'll be down to the bottom before us."

Carl now looked out ahead and saw a fearful sight; the sea, a league across, was like a boiling cauldron, whirling round and round, and gradually, as it were, shelving down to the centre, where there appeared a huge hole, round which the water wheeled with an awful swirl.

A gallant three-masted ship was within the whirlpool; she no longer answered the helm, but flew round and round the cauldron, gradually nearing the centre, which she soon reached, and stern foremost, rushed down the gulf that swallowed her up.

The little boat, piloted by the tall mariner, flew directly across the whirlpool to its centre, and the next moment Carl found himself walking with his companion on the ribbed sea sand at the bottom of the Maelstrom.

What a sight met the eyes of Carl! Mountains of wealth, wrecks of a thousand vessels, and the white bones of mariners, thicker strewn than gravestones in a churchyard. But what mainly attracted the eyes of Carl was the gold and silver that lay about, as plentiful as pebble stones.

"Now," said Kahlbrannar, after Carl had feasted his eyes awhile upon all he saw, "what would you give, Carl Bluven, to be master of all this?"

"Faith," said Carl, "I am but a poor fisherman; you ask me what I would give for all I see here, and you know I have nothing to give."

"There you're wrong again," said Kahlbrannar. "Sit down upon that chest of gold, friend, and listen. You shall be the richest butter merchant and ham merchant and spirit merchant in all Bergenhuus, and have more gold and silver in your coffers than King Christian has in his treasure, and in return you shall marry your daughter to my son."

Carl, having no daughter and not knowing whether he might ever have one, and half thinking the offer a jest, said, "A bargain be it, then."

It was the morning after this that Carl, awakening just at daybreak, sprang out of bed, and, telling Uldewalla that he was going to draw a net that morning, left his hut and walked toward the rocks.

Uldewalla, feeling uneasy in her mind, rose and looked through the small window and saw her husband in the grey of the morning walk out among the black rocks (for the tide was back), and she could see him standing close to the low water line, and another of taller stature standing by him.

Carl, however, was not long absent. A terrific storm soon after arose, and in the midst of it he arrived, rolling a huge cask up to the door.

Next day Carl told her he was discontented with his manner of living—that he was resolved to be a rich man, and that the very next morning they should depart for Bergen.

Next morning saw Carl and Uldewalla on their way to Bergen. Uldewalla proposed that they should take their provisions with them and such little articles as they possessed, but Carl said there was no occasion for such strict economy, as he had a well-stored warehouse and everything comfortable at Bergen.

Carl led Uldewalla to a good house, facing the harbour where, as he had said, everything was prepared for their reception. A neighbour who had lived hard by brought the key, telling them that a good fire was lighted, for a tall gentleman, who engaged the house, had ordered everything to be got ready that evening, and adding:

"The quantity of the goods brought into the warehouse this day is the wonder of all Bergen. They've been carried in as fast as boats could land them, and the boatmen, they say, were all as like to each other as one cask they carried was to another."

Never indeed was warehouse better stored than Carl Bluven's. He was soon looked upon as the most prosperous merchant and the most moneyed man in Bergenhuus.

It is true indeed that Carl had detractors. Some wondered where he came from, and others where he got his money. All his payments were made in old coin, or strange coin, and not in the current money of the country. But prosperity always raises up enemies, and Carl's gold was good gold and none the worse for its age.

To Uldewalla all this was a mighty agreeable change, and in good time Uldewalla became the mother of a girl so beautiful that she was the admiration of her parents and the wonder of all Bergen.

For the first fifteen years after Carintha was born Carl was not only a thriving, but a right merry merchant. His dealings grew more and more extensive, and in respect of wealth he distanced all competition.

But as Carintha grew up Carl grew less merry, and when she had passed her sixteenth summer, and when Uldewalla spoke to her husband about settling Carintha in the world, anyone, to have looked in Carl's face at that time, would have seen that something extraordinary was passing within.

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It was about a year after this that the son of the governor of Bergenhuus, Hamel von Storgelven, cast his eyes upon Carintha and became enamoured of her. She on her part did not rebuke his advances, except with that maidenly timidity that is becoming, and all Bergen said there would be a wedding.

Carl began to treat all that had once passed as an old story, and, seeing his moneybags about him and his warehouses full of goods, there was nothing to remind him of his hut on the sea-coast and what had happened there, and nothing but what might well breed confidence in any man.

It was a fine, sunshiny day—the day, as has been said, before the celebration of Carintha's nuptials—and Carl Bluven was standing on the quay with the other merchants, looking at the cheerful sight of the ships passing in and out and the bales of goods landing, and chatting about city matters and trade, when suddenly all eyes were directed toward the harbour. Carl's eyes followed the rest, and, sure enough, he saw something that might well create wonder in others and something more in him.

"Where does it come from?" said one.

"What a singular build!" said another.

"Never was such a boat seen in Bergen harbour," said a third.

"And look at the helmsman," said a fourth. "He's taller than the mast."

As for Carl, he said nothing, but remained standing with the group of merchants. Meanwhile the boat touched the landing place, and the tall mariner stepped out, and with a singular sneer on his face walked directly up to Carl Bluven, who had not fallen back like the rest, but manfully stood his ground, and was, therefore, a little apart from his companions.

No one could distinctly hear what passed between the tall, strange, old mariner and the chief magistrate. It was evident, however, that angry words passed between the two. The mariner, darting a menacing scowl at his companion, turned away and descended into his boat, which he paddled out of the harbour, while everyone looked after it and asked of his neighbour the same question as before:

"Where does it come from?"

"I served him right," said the chief magistrate as he walked homeward. "Fulfil my bargain indeed! No, no! If he was such a simpleton as to fill my warehouse with goods, and my coffers with cash upon a mere promise, I'm not such a fool as to keep it. Let me but keep on dry land and I may snap my fingers at him, and, by the ghost of King Kyree, if I catch him again on the quay of Bergen I'll clap him in the city gaol!"

He now knew the worst. His promise could not bind Carintha in any way, who would be secure even against treachery so soon as the wedding ring was placed upon her finger.

For more than twenty years after the marriage of Carintha, Carl Bluven continued to enjoy his prosperity and to exercise at due intervals the office of chief magistrate, and he saw his grand-children grow about him, and at length buried his wife Uldewalla. But the penalty of the rash promise had yet to be paid.

It chanced that Carl Bluven—who, by-the-by, was now Carl von Bluven, having long ago received that dignity—was bidden to a feast at the house of a rich citizen who lived just on the opposite side of the harbour.

Although it was nearly half a league round the head of the harbour and across the drawbridge, Carl walked round rather than trust himself across in a boat, a conveyance which, ever since his interview on the quay, he had studiously avoided.

In the midst of their conviviality, and when it nearly approached midnight, the merriment was suddenly interrupted by the hollow beat of the alarm drum, and all hastily arising, and running to the window, which looked out upon the harbour, Carl saw that his own warehouse was in flames.

It was, as has been said, half a league round by the drawbridge; the merchant saw his well-stored warehouse within a stone's throw of him, burning away—the fumes of wine were in his head—and without further thought he leapt into a boat that lay just below and pushed across.

Scarcely had Carl von Bluven done this when he recollected his danger. Paddle as he would, the boat made no way.

Some seamen awoke at the loud cries for help, and some, who jumped out of their hammocks, told how they saw a boat drifting out of the harbour.

Two or three days after this event the *Tellemarke*, free trader, arrived in Bergen from Iceland and reported that but for a strong northerly breeze she would have been sucked into the Maelstrom; that a little before sunset when within two leagues of the whirlpool, a small boat was seen drifting empty, and that soon after another, the smallest and strangest built boat that ever was seen, passed close under their bows, to windward, paddling in the direction of the Maelstrom; that two mariners were in it, he at the helm of an exceedingly tall stature and singular countenance; that the other cried out for help, upon which the ship lay to and manned a boat with four rowers, but that with all their exertions they were unable to gain upon the little boat, which was worked by a single paddle, and that the boatmen, fearing they might be drawn into the whirlpool, returned to the ship, and that, just at sunset, they could descry the small boat, by the help of their glasses, steering right across the Maelstrom as if it had been a small pond.

H. Riviers.

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THE GLADIATOR

A TALE OF THE EASTERN EMPIRE

By GEORGE C. WALLIS.

PART THE FIRST.

"The Ambitions of Youth."

CHAPTER I.

The Little Maid.

Across the famous passage of the Bosphorus, through the lightening shades of the sunrise, out of the darkness into the dawn, a ship came slowly, impelled by the lazy breeze. Many days had the vessel laboured in the Adriatic Sea amongst the islands; and the captain, when her prow cut the waters of the Golden Horn and the glittering buildings of the first Christian City in the world uprose on every hand, heaved a sigh of relief. And Rhesus, who saw the splendour of Constantinople for the first time in his life as they stood into that palace-fringed arm of the sea, where the fleets of fifty nations could have lain at anchor, felt the young blood of hope leap within him.

"My father shall see that I am worthy of his name!" he cried to his friend Proclus, as they stepped ashore. "I shall make myself famous here, and he shall hear of my success in his Sicilian home, and own that he did ill to cast me adrift on the world!"

"And what do you call success?" asked Proclus, in his quiet way.

"Fame, wealth, power, the love of beautiful women and the praise of honest men."

"So," said Proclus, "none of them are things worth striving for, friend Rhesus, saving the second, and perhaps the fourth. As for the praise of honest men—that will be lacking for a certainty. Honest men are not to be found in this age; least of all in this city of corruption."

Proclus was a cynic of cynics. Born and nurtured in the polluted atmosphere of the Byzantine Court, and yet being honest and disdainful of ill-gained success himself, he sought refuge in a pessimism that sat well upon him. Rhesus was from distant Sicily, unsophisticated, full of the fire of youth and ambition, and enthusiastic in the faith of the good old gods who ever favoured the strong arm and the stern will, and his cousin's satire jarred upon him.

"Surely we shall find some brave and true men," he said with fine scorn; "surely some who will die for their country, for their faith, for their love?"

Proclus was but a few years older than the other, who was now twenty, was not an inch taller, and had less of a manly bearing, but he stood and smiled at his friend in the busy street as a teacher might at a backward scholar.

"I' faith!" he cried. "you are soft with the blush of youth yet, after all I have taught you on the voyage! I tell you the age is corrupt to the core. The old faith which we two yet hold is fast dying, and can never be revived; the new faith is honeycombed with rottenness already, from its mitred bishops in their palaces down to its credulous mobs that howl and jeer at every Pagan who passes on the street. The Emperor is but a tool in the hands of unscrupulous ministers, and these enrich themselves from the public wealth. *Miserie, miserie!*—as these Latin-canting Christians say—there is no good in the world. The only thing worth living for is an ample dinner."

Rhesus did not reply. He was busy thinking, resolving, planning. He rebelled against his friend's picture, and determined to prove in himself that all men were not liars, hypocrites, traitors, thieves. And, he also reflected, was it not his secret hope, his cherished ambition, to raise aloft once more the fallen banner of the olden faith—the sturdy Paganism of his Roman ancestors, who in their day had made Rome great—above the sign of the Cross? He would show the world what a Roman and a Pagan could do!

"Well, if you have done day-dreaming, friend," broke in the voice of Proclus upon his reflections, "we will be bestirring ourselves a little better. See, we have left the Convent of St. Conan behind, and in the square yonder is the famous church of St. Sophia; there is the imperial palace; and there, over the house-tops, you can see the walls of the Hippodrome."

"Lead on!" replied Rhesus. "I would fain see the horses I am to drive, if, as you say, you can get me entered for the races of the nones of June. But I wish your green sash was not quite so glaring, Proclus; the citizens in blue seem not so pleased with it."

"I will do all I promised you, Rhesus, when you embarked with me. I have great influence with the keeper of the beasts to our faction in the Hippodrome, and my gold has greater influence still. Besides, your figure and bearing will commend you favourably. Forsooth!—old Sibron would rave like one possessed if he missed the chance of your services, having once seen you! As for the sour looks of our enemies, the blues, confusion take them. . . . Pallas Athene! but that was nearer than to my liking! out with your steel, youngster, as you value your neck, and follow me!"

It all happened so quickly that Rhesus scarcely knew how it was done, but he found himself at his friend's side defending the end of a long, narrow street against a shouting, furious mob of blue-garmented fanatics, whose knives gleamed in the sunlight before him. A dagger, thrown by a skilful hand, flashed before his companion's face, missing him only because he saw it coming and held back, and the two had now turned at bay, raising the rallying cry of "*Nika!*" as they fought. Friends with tokens of green cut their way to them through the blue throng; others ran to their aid from the rear; cries and oaths, laughter and jeers, arose on every hand; they were engaged in a faction fight and would do well to escape with whole skins.

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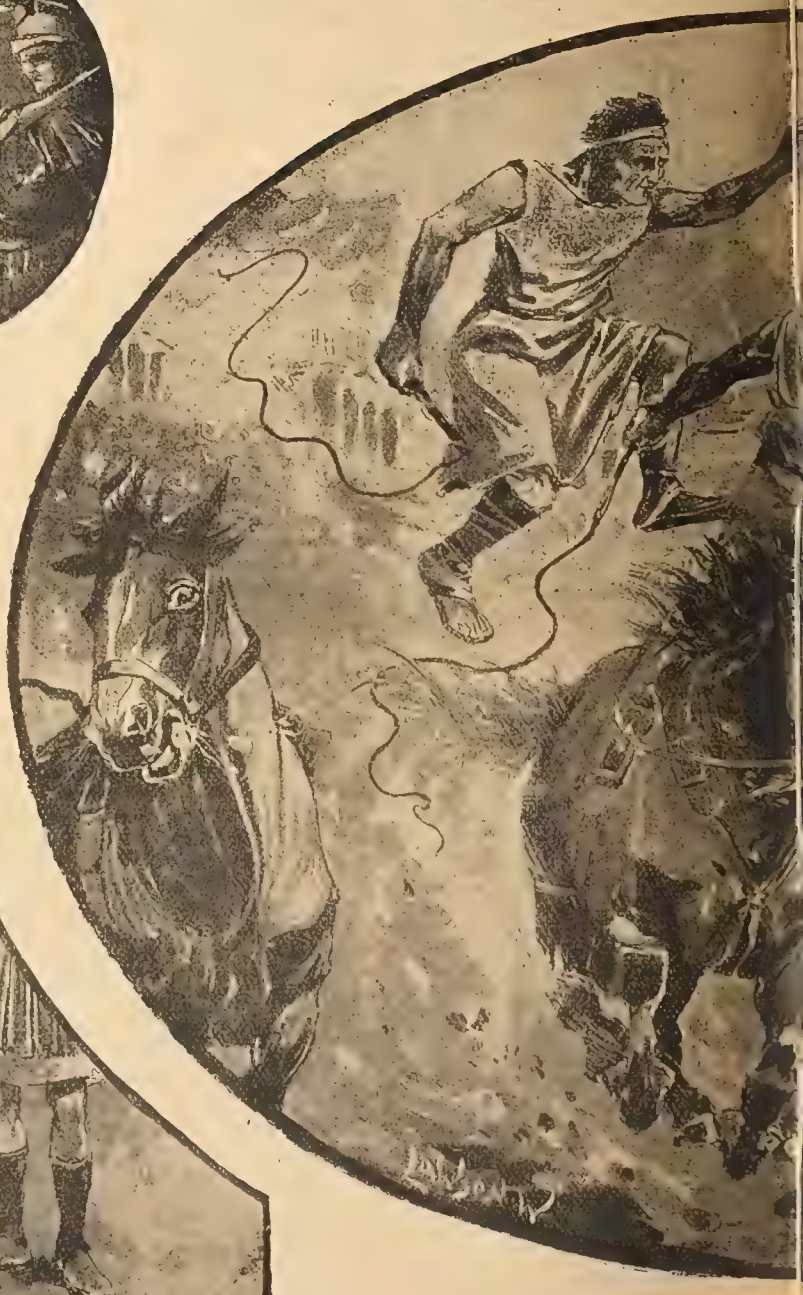
Pictures from "THE GLADIATOR"

A dagger flashed before his companion's face.

START READING TO-DAY.

"I hate you, you great ugly men!"



His foe l

A Tale of the Eastern Emp

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Our Grand New Serial Story.

pt apt upon him.

They thundered on the wooden door of the portal with their sword hilts.

START READING TO-DAY.

"There is a plot brewing."

Empire, By GEORGE C. WALLIS.

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Something of the insensate enmity and partisanship of the rival factions of blue and green, born in the arenas and nursed for their own purposes by the emperors and the gladiators, had reached to all parts of the decaying empire. Even in distant Sicily the youths had worn the colours in the games, and partly because his father had favoured the green and partly because the blues were the favourites of Court and Church, Rhesus had adopted the first. Yet it was only an emblem to him. It seemed so unworthy of men to come to blows—to blood—over the paltry significance of a badge blue or green, held by most for no better reason than a whim, a fashion, or a folly. But as he strove there by the side of Proclus, the swords of a dozen friends glinting round, he had no choice but to fight as desperately as the rest.

It was a moment or two of frenzy, and then it was over. Knives flashed, swords sang, arrows flew, and more than one blue champion went down before the swinging strokes of the blade his young arms wielded, and then the riot ceased as suddenly as it began. The assailants and assailed melted away before the sweeping charge of the Heruli cavalry, and the friends, running low like foxes, escaped by sundry dark passages that Proclus knew well to the gates of the theatre. They thundered on the wooden door of the portal with their sword hilts, and the servitor, recognising Proclus, let them pass in, making no comment on their red-stained garments.

"Gods! If this comes of wearing the green, I think I shall lay the sash aside," said Rhesus. "Has it come to this, that one cannot walk in the streets of the capital without being called upon to fight for one's life at any time? Methinks it is a wonder that the gods send not an earthquake to swallow up this city, as they destroyed Antioch but a year ago."

"Oh, 'tis nothing!" answered Proclus lightly, wiping his heated face. "I have seen many worse encounters than this, and the cavalry have not often been so early on the scene. We have done well, my Rhesus—and you laid about you lustily. I am more convinced than ever that you are the man I want for this race. But here comes old Sibron himself; he shall decide."

A wiry, sinister-looking, ferret-eyed fellow, his face wrinkled with the craftiness of many years, came towards them from the cage room.

"Back so soon, my worthy cynic?" he croaked in his harsh voice. "Have you brought us a new recruit?—we need one desperately enough, Heaven knows!"

Whereupon Proclus drew forward his friend and retailed his circumstances and his merits as glibly as a dealer bartering slaves; discussing his good points, his muscles, his stature, his enthusiasm, with a wondrous disregard for his feelings, and the end of the confab was that Rhesus was engaged to drive the second chariot of the four that the green faction had matched against an equal number of the blues for the honours of a day of sport. Much hung on the issue of the race, they told him, for the Emperor, although prejudiced in favour of the blue faction by the hatred of the fair Theodora, was inclined to praise success of every sort. In the gladiatorial fights, said the greens, victory would be theirs beyond doubt, so that the chariot race alone would turn the balance.

So, with all youth's thoughtlessness, Rhesus entered with spirit into the cause of the green factions, and the keeper of the beasts was so pleased thereat that he would have no nay but the novice must straightway lead out the steeds and run them round the sanded course.

Nothing averse, Rhesus sprang into one of the idle cars, while Proclus geared in the mettled horses, and shaking the rein with a practised hand, he shot away on the wings of the wind, a swirling dust cloud following in his wake. Once, twice, amid the admiring cries of the dawdling youths of both factions who stood about, he thundered round the arena, and a third time passed old Sibron like a flash. Halfway round, a little girl ran out from the side, clapping her hands in childish glee, and seemingly heedless of danger, stood almost in the way. The off horse swerved slightly, seeing the little figure, and reared, a trace broke, and the two animals shot forward, but not so quickly that Rhesus had not time, in the brief pause, to stretch out a hand to the laughing little maid and lift her into the car beside him. She clung to him confidingly as they went madly round, and when he pulled up and dismounted, still held fast to his hand.

"A sturdy jade for a young one!" laughed Proclus, patting her golden head, "you are indeed a lucky fellow, Rhesus, to have found a love so soon after landing. Who is she, Sibron?"

"She is who she is, most worthy patron," answered the keeper, with an evil twinkle in his eyes. "Her mother, whom she is named after, was Eutasia, and died over her. That is all we know. The little one came here by chance just after you left on your voyage, and none of us have had the heart to turn her away. Sometimes she will go home with me, sometimes with Marcen; cares for none of us, saving to plague our lives, and seems to have no sense of fear."

"She will grow up like the rest, I suppose," said Proclus, turning away wearily, "and either end her days in the galleys or on the throne. I vow the puissant Theodora herself was just such another dare-devil, only that her father was responsible for *her* upbringing. Well, 'tis the way of the world. And if you are tired of showing off your prowess, Rhesus, and conquering fair damsels with the display, we will be going home. After the ship and the fight I am tired and hungry, and we must get over both, if I am to show you the sights of the city by night. Kiss the little one and come away."

Rhesus bent down to caress the sweet little face held up to him, and as she threw her little arms round his neck with all a child's abandon, old Sibron and the others broke into a rough burst of laughter at the sight. She pulled herself away at that with a finely tragic gesture, stamping her tiny foot on the ground like a veritable fury, and cried angrily:

"Oh, I hate you, you great, ugly men! You are always making fun of me! I like this stranger better than any of you. He is gentle and good, and will not tease me, I know. I hope he will come here again. I wish he would take me away!"

And she stamped her little foot again with a passion that was most amusing. Then she looked up at Rhesus, and he bent and kissed her once more, and came away.

"I am beginning to prove your black picture of the world false, friend Proclus," he said, as they merged with the pressing throng in the streets. "I have already found some good in this city; something with a promise of all that is best in life; something worth loving and living and dying for."

"By my soul! Have you fallen in love so soon?" cried the other mockingly. "And with a waif of the circus, to boot?"

"I think I have," answered Rhesus seriously. "I think that little Eutasia has the making of a good and beautiful woman in her, and it will not be my fault if she is not kept from the harm that lurks round her future life. Might I not do worse? And if I am in love with her so soon and so seriously, what then?"

Proclus did not reply, but led on, an enigmatical expression on his face. And as they went, though all the sights, the dresses, the various nationalities that mixed in the streets, the great buildings and costly shrines, were new to his eyes, Rhesus heeded them not. The rough laugh and light words of Sibron rang jarring in his ears, and all the faces that he saw merged into one face, that danced before him with childish merriment and admiration shining from the bright blue eyes, and the sunlight filtering through the wind-tossed tangle of the sunny hair.

It was the face of little Eutasia, the merry little waif of the Hippodrome. And how often, in dark days and bright, on land and sea, lustrous with love or clouded with sorrow, did he see that fairy face in the after years!

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CHAPTER II.

The Chariot Race.

Gaily passed the month of waiting before the nones of June came, and the two friends well filled the interval with training and merry-making, and adventures of the wildest kind. Rhesus glided easily into the restless life of the city; it was like a draught of the fine old vintage of the Campania to his provincial mind; and ere the day of the festival dawned he knew most of the forbidden haunts of the capital, most of its streets and secret passages, many of its public characters, a little of its pompous Court. He was even presented to the Emperor Justinian—for Proclus was judicious in the bestowal of his liberal bribes—and in spite of the green badge that he wore, received an assurance that he would be watched with interest in the arena.

As for the enmity between the factions, Rhesus cared little for it, being young and on the threshold of a fresh career. He went with the stream of life, and, cast by circumstance into one of the rival eddies of it, remained there. He got entangled in more than one hot broil in the streets, but fortune favoured him each time, and his skill of prowess, both with the sword and the chariot, made him the talk of the city. Solitary wearers of the blue gave him wide roadroom, and the cry of "Rhesus the Roman!" became a well-known rallying cry for his own partisans.

And that there was need for unity amongst them is not to be wondered at, for perhaps never, in the whole long history of Rome's deplorable decline, was the bitterness of the factions so intense as in the five or six years before that short but terrible Reign of Terror which shook the Eastern Empire to its foundations.

The factions were better in their infancy, when there were four instead of two, and their rivalry was merely good-humoured competition in the games: when the *whites* swore by the snows of winter; the *blues* by the sky and sea and the mists of autumn; the *greens* by the verdure of spring; the *reds* by the sun and the dog-star of summer.

But at this time their enmity was concentrated into two rival parties only, typical of the conflict of earth and sea. If the blues won the games, the fishermen and sailors expected prosperous navigation and rich yields on the deep blue sea; if the greens conquered, the husbandmen awaited abundant harvest and large fruit crops. The rivalry had deepened and spread; rulers and ministers had fostered and intensified it for state or personal gain, thinking to divert the people's attention thus from their own ill doings; the gladiatorial section of the populace encouraged the factions for the sake of their own calling, and the mandates and banes of the Church thundered with such deadly effect against all heathens and heretics—were invoked in vain on behalf of peace, or not invoked at all.

It was scarcely safe for a well-known leader of either party to be alone in the lower quarters of the city, even in the daytime, and night was a time of utter lawlessness, of untold crime, of violence by dagger and noose.

In the reign of Theodoric, imperial authority had to be interposed between the blues in power and their unfortunate rivals, and in the reign of Anatasinus the green faction had retaliated by murdering no fewer than 3,000 of their enemies at a public feast.

From then the rivalry spread everywhere; became a feud, a vendetta, destined to be quenched only in the life blood of innocent thousands then unborn; and after a brief pause in the reign of Justin, broke out with renewed virulence when Justinian and Theodora assumed the imperial purple, and openly favoured the blue. The privileged party grew boastful, darkly hinting at a terrible reprisal in store for their foes, and went about in the barbaric dress of the Huns—closely-fitting sleeves and ample garments; cultivating the long hair, and imitating the lofty step and the sonorous voice of that people. And as the blues grew insolent, the greens grew desperate, and the bitterness of the feud increased.

So, as the day of the great race, which was fixed for the first day after the Whitsuntide festival proper, drew nearer, Rhesus became a person of great importance, the object of a hundred happily-frustrated plots, the recipient of almost royal care; and when the sun of the eventful morning lit the waters of the bay and gilded the giant cross on Sophia, he was more talked about than anyone in the city. His age, weight, height, strength, health, parentage, opinions and fancies, were common knowledge, and common sources of dispute and wagers in the many drinking places of the gladiatorial quarter, and when he set forth from the house of Proclus to the Hippodrome he went guarded by a chosen band of fifty well-armed friends, all dressed in olive green.

It was a glorious day, and so hot that the great awning was drawn completely over the Hippodrome, to shield the people and the performers alike from the glare of the sun. The circling seats, rising tier above tier, were crowded to their utmost capacity, thousands more stood in the aisles and passages and climbed into the niches of the wall, some even stood on the sand of the arena itself, risking everything for the excitement of the hour. There were all sorts and conditions of women and men, all sects, all nationalities, all fashions of dress. There were arrogant Huns and lordly Vandals, Goths and Visigoths, swarthy Egyptians and darker Moors, Persians and Sythians, and islanders galore. The sombre clothes of the workers were mingled with the gay apparel and bright colours of the parasites of Society—the functionaries of the court, the soldiers of the guard, the ladies free and fair—and through all the throng, here scattered, there massed in clusters, were the badges of blue and green.

The first rounds of the conflict were tame, and interested little. The greens carried all before them, so well were their champions trained, and even in the antique contests of sword against trident and net, sword against spear, foot against horse, revived for the occasion, the blue faction but held their own. Then it was Rhesus' turn.

"Now," said Sibron aside to him, as the first two chariots dashed off from the starting line amid a burst of cheers, "you must make the running from the first, and not draw rein for anything that may be shouted at you as you pass round. There is a plot brewing even now, that I have luckily got some faint hint of, to bring you to grief on your way, and your only chance is to go right on, caring for nothing, but keeping slightly to the front always. Once you fall behind you are doomed."

"I understand," said Rhesus, setting his teeth with determination, "they will try to throw an obstacle in my way, and if I keep just ahead of the other, they will not dare, lest it upset their own chariot also."

"I can trust you now," said the keeper. "And if you win this event, and we can disable one of the blues by this self-same trick, the balance of the day's result will be ours. They have won the first race even now."

A storm of applause, mingled with cries of anger, rose from the mighty concourse as he spoke. The driver of the blue chariot had passed the goal a good length ahead, the blue flag rose above the green.

Then Rhesus sprang into his car and seized the reins of his practised steeds, and side by side with his rival in blue, awaited the signal.

As his gaze passed round that seething sea of faces, all glowering with excitement and fierce hope, he noticed the Emperor and his boldly-beautiful consort in the purple seat, watching with eager intentness, and behind them the Court officials and the rows of bishops and priests, and he turned sick at heart to think how easily that human ocean could be lashed into terrible storm. Then, as the edile cracked his whip and he shouted to his horses, Rhesus caught sight of the face of little Eutasia amongst a group who stood within the ring, and the little maid's saucy nod and smile put new courage into him as he swept away.

At first, Hermiot, his rival, took the lead, but Rhesus laid on the thong with right good will, and heedless of cries from

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the crowd that his axle-trees were breaking, gradually drew level, and then, with a splendid spurt, gained the inside curve at a turning, and shot to the front. Hermiot flung at him an anathema as he passed with a smile on his face, and lashed his steeds with savage fury, but Rhesus kept to the inside edge and twice went round the sanded course in front and in safety. One more round, and the race would be won.

The pace was furious now. Rhesus dared not slacken speed and so reserve himself for the last few lengths, for Hermiot thundered close behind, and the breath of his horses came in hot jets against his back.

Through the cloud of dust that swept round with them, Rhesus saw the people standing up on the seats in their frenzy of excitement, and heard their cries of encouragement or rage, and the odds that were being shouted from one to another.

When half the last round was run, the blue made a desperate effort, and the nostrils of his steeds drew alongside those of the green for an instant. Then they failed again, and Rhesus made up the headway once more, urging on his coursers with both voice and thong. A few more moments of mad energy, and then victory would have been his.

As he dashed on towards the goal, past the place where the Imperial party sat, Hermiot suddenly sprang his horses forward again, and before Rhesus could catch the warning cry that a little green-clad figure uttered piercingly as it flashed across the sand towards him, his foe leapt upon him and seized the reins, and drew his steeds back upon their haunches, leaving his own to go on as they listed.

It was done so suddenly that Rhesus had not time to prevent it, but he turned fiercely when he recovered from the shock, and snatching the thong from Hermiot's hand and seizing him round the neck, bore him to the floor of the car. There they struggled while the frightened animals tore on again.

Hermiot was not the stronger, but he was yet so powerful that Rhesus could not disengage himself as they glared at each other in the swaying car; and the latter felt that the foul trick had lost him the race. He kept his foe down, however, and presently the car steadied, and the galloping slowed considerably and then ceased, amongst a roar of concentrated anger such as he hoped never to hear again. Yet there was a note of admiration mingled with it, and as the two loosed their grasp and looked sullenly about them, they saw the little maid holding the heads of the panting brutes who had borne the car along whilst they fought.

But the empty chariot of Hermiot had passed the winning line first, and the judges, secretly under the protection of the Empress Theodora, and bribed by the blue faction, gave out that Rhesus had been defeated, and the race must go to the blue.

An angry howl of rage went up from the greens at that, and Justinian, anxious not to carry his favouritism too far all at once, overruled the judgment, and held that the event must be considered a tie, as the horses were so nearly equal. The Empress looked displeased, and black glances appeared on many faces, but for once he held firm, and the flags went up together, side by side.

Old Sibron was beside himself with fury, and when Rhesus passed him on the way to the stables, little Eutasia perched upon the back of one of the steeds with all the grave assurance of her dozen years, he grunted surlily that folks who could not keep their eyes open were no good as charioteers.

Before Rhesus could reply, Eutasia, with ready speech, had answered for him.

"It was not his fault, old curmudgeon. He was keeping ahead, as you told him, and could not see Hermiot behind. You had better drive a chariot yourself, Sibron."

The grim fellow's face wrinkled to a smile at her sauciness, and he bade them pass on. As he spoke, a burst of applause told that the blues had won the third race, and by the time Rhesus had came out of the stable again, they had won the last.

It was not safe, as Proclus said, in the state of public temper, to pay the foe back in their own coin.

So they saw the blue in the ascendant for the rest of the afternoon, and when the games were over and the flushed thousands poured out into the streets, those of the green badges hied them away to their homes with all the speed they could.

The city was given over to wild rejoicings and carousals, and so many were the flags and banners and garlands of the conquering faction that were everywhere displayed, that the capital seemed suddenly draped in blue. And all the night long Rhesus heard at intervals the cry of "*Nika!*"* and the shrieks of belated citizens who had fallen into the clutches of the roving bands of the victors and could not answer to the watchword. It was a night of terror; a foretaste of that still more awful night of fear that was yet to come.

(*To be continued.*)

* Note.—"Nika!"—vanquish—the watchword of the factions.

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THE CROCHET NEEDLE.

Miss Lily sat in close companionship as usual, with her familiar spirit, a piece of crocheted edging. Miss Lily was still pretty, with the pathetic beauty held as flotsam from the wreck of years. Her hair was prettier as silver than it had ever been as brown, and her eyes, though they had lost their vivid glow and eagerness, had gained a kindly sympathy.

Her tenderness had even extended to the crocheting in her hand, and imparted something to that usually very impersonal object that her fancy had fretted into thinking a response.

"It's almost done," she thought. "I can go back to the oak leaf soon."

A change in the crochet pattern was the chief diversion of Lily's life, that ran on as monotonously to the observer as the tune of the famous harper who played upon only one string.

She wondered as she sat staring dully at the blaze, how the crocheting had come to mean so much to her, and could not think for the instant; then half remembered, saddened a little, lost the thread of memory again, recovered it, and fell to musing, her elbow resting on the table, her cheek in her palm.

She could hardly believe now that a certain few years of her life had ever really happened. They must have belonged to some other and wandered wilfully into her own, for there was no home for them in hers, or likeness unto anything they brought.

She was still looking vaguely, half wistfully, at the fire when her door-bell rang, and someone had entered the room and was hurrying to her side.

"Aunt Lily," said a girlish, tremulous voice, "I've come to ask you to help me. Mother said you had suffered like this once, and you had learnt to forget, and I thought perhaps you could show me the way."

"What is it, Grace?"

"Oh, it's Phil!" she cried. "He doesn't care for me any more. He's paying attention to Jennie Thompson now, and I can't bear it. Mother said other women have to bear such things, but she'd always been happy and I could come to you. You could help me," she said, looking up appealingly. "You could teach me to forget."

"Yes," said her aunt slowly.

Then it came back to her, all her own little story, and a dim, broken memory of the first heartache and her own longing to forget.

"Poor little girl," whispered Lily, stroking her beautiful mass of golden hair. "How was it I learnt to forget? Let me think. Yes, I remember now. Wait a minute, dear, I will show you."

She slipped out of the room and soon returned, bringing three rolls of very broad crocheted lace.

"Can you crochet, Grace?"

"Not very much," said Grace wonderingly.

"Well, I will teach you. This is the very way I learnt to forget. The needle slips in and out, and the sunlight and firelight shine on it, and the lace grows and is so pretty, and it brings comfort. When I began I couldn't see the needle—Oh, how long ago that is!—for the tears. That was when I knew he would never come again, and I had my wedding dress all ready—it's grown yellow in a chest in the garret. But after a while the lace took up my trouble drop by drop till it was gone, and I couldn't tell you to-day where it is. So I'll teach you, dear. There are the three rolls I did in the three years, one for each. They are yellow now, you see.

"If I'd been a man, I should have gone away to Africa. But I couldn't very well, so I learnt to crochet. I never gave the lace away, you see, because I had worked my trouble into it, and I was afraid. This is the first year's—you see I've numbered it one—and this is the second's, and this is the third's. There's the three."

Lily handled the rolls over and over, lost for a minute in the associations which they revived. Her niece seemed to have forgotten her own grief for the time and was observing her aunt curiously as she bent over the lace.

Lily sat silent for a time, smoothing out the creases of the lace and drawing it out to its length. It seemed to have the effect of an enchanter's wand, for it summoned old scenes and faces at will, and Lily grew blind to the little room, and the needs of her guest. At last Grace moved impatiently.

"Yes, yes," said Lily, like one awakenening, "to forget. This is the way. Here is the old pattern. I will teach you."

Grace took the needle helplessly.

"Do you think I could forget so, aunt?" she asked hesitatingly.

"I did," said Lily.

Grace had returned to her task and made one or two awkward motions with the needle when there came a ring at the door.

"It's Phil!" exclaimed Grace, springing up.

"Grace!" said the recreant lover, standing awkwardly by the door, after Aunt Lily had admitted him and had retreated towards her chair. There were shame and pleading in his voice.

"We'll try the crocheting some other time, Aunt Lily," said Grace.

Then seeing her aunt's half-dazed expression, as if she hardly understood this new development of affairs, she ran back and kissed her. Grace's face bore no trace of sadness as she turned to Phil, and they went on chatting merrily.

Lily listened till the last footfall on the gravel had died away, then carefully rolled up the lace.

"She think's she happier, but I'm not so sure. A man's heart is uncertain property, but a crochet needle," as she laid her hand approvingly upon those on the table, "is always the same."

W. Fraser.

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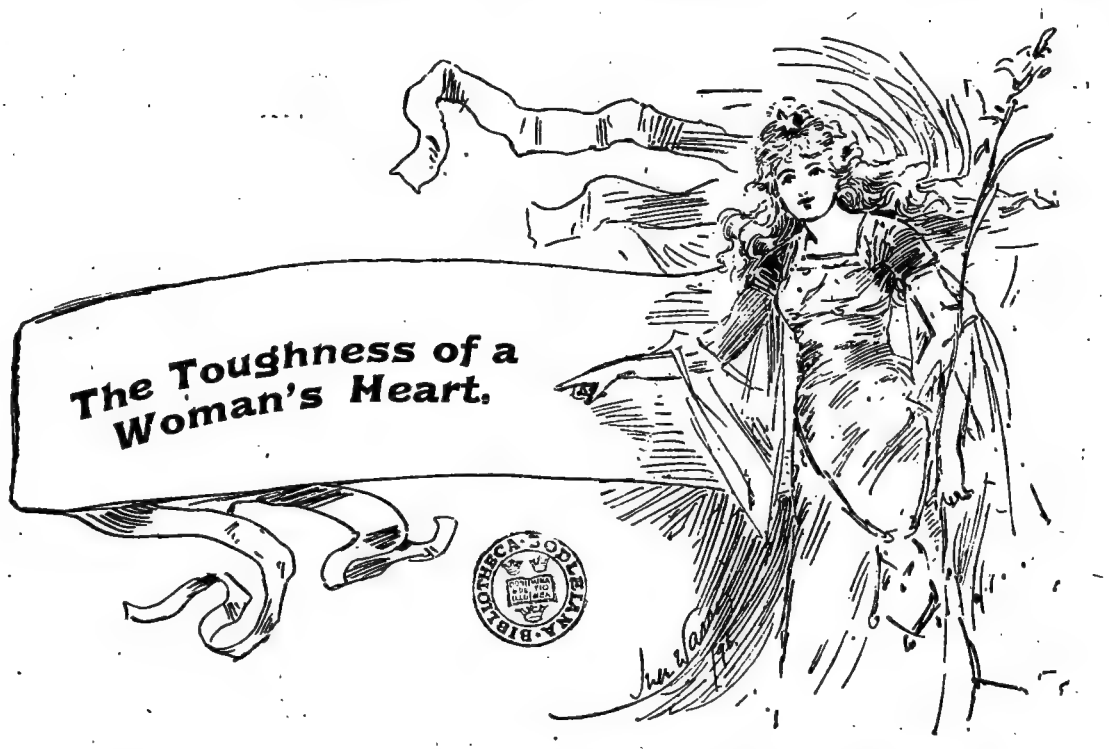

For five-and-twenty years past I have never seen *Romeo and Juliet* billed for representation without an involuntary shudder. Is there a story connected with it in my memory? Well, yes, there is, and one almost as tragic in its incidents as those embodied in Shakespeare's immortal story of an unhappy love.

We were playing in a small north-country town. Business was not good, the treasury was sometimes empty, and salaries were not always forthcoming.

It was at Smalltown that Roy Raneleigh joined us. Our first juvenile had left us the week before. Poor fellow, he was in the last stage of consumption, and returned to London to die. Roy Raneleigh, who took his place, was a young fellow who had been lawyer, litterateur, and something of an amateur actor.

He was a born Bohemian, if I ever met one, and the life of a strolling player with its occasional privations seemed to suit a temperament that under the gloomiest skies could be buoyant, hopeful and happy. His very presence revived the drooping spirits of most of us, and with his first appearance business picked up wonderfully.

We opened in Smalltown with *The Lady of Lyons*, a play not quite so hackneyed a quarter of a century ago as it is to-day. Roy Raneleigh played Claude to as sweet a Pauline as ever held an audience captive.

Caroline Chamberlain might not be called beautiful in the common acceptation of a grievously misused word. Her face defied criticism and baffled description; but it was just such a face as would live in the memory of an artist or a poet for half a lifetime. She was the daughter of an actor, and had already given promise of success in that profession in which she had been born.

It might be truly said she lived for her art, and had no other hope or aspiration but to win distinction in it. But before the expiration of a week I knew that the passion she had so often simulated on the stage had touched her heart at last.

Yes, she loved Roy Raneleigh, and the knowledge came to me with a benumbing sense of dreary desolation. I had known Carrie Chamberlain from her childhood, and although it is not often that a man loves in his maturer years the little girl he remembers in short dresses and pinafores, I nursed, against my better reason, that foolish passion in my heart of hearts.

Of course, I quietly submitted to the inevitable, and after all, there is no sounder philosophy than that "which teaches acquiescence and optimism." But there was another member of the company who also divined the girl's secret. He was one of her most persistent lovers, albeit a rejected one.

It is singular how quickly an unsuccessful lover will read in the glance of the woman he loves the message that is meant for another. The man who loves and is beloved may mistake its meaning, but his jealous rival, never.

We were gathered on the stage one gloomy forenoon waiting for rehearsal.

Roy Raneleigh and Carrie were engaged in a quiet conversation at the wings, when Earle Staunton approached me. There was an ugly look on his rather handsome face as he surveyed the pair intently.

"Do you see that rooster yonder? He has been but a week or two with the company, and already monopolises all Miss Chamberlain's society."

"And she seems to like it, doesn't she?" I remarked dryly.

"You think she cares for him, Halstead?"

"I believe she loves him," I answered, and regretted the words as soon as spoken.

Earle Staunton had never been popular with his

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professional brethren. He was a man of superior education and a fairly successful actor, but morose and cynical; his manner was repellent to those who were disposed to live in a brotherhood of social good-fellowship.

As I left the theatre two nights later I was overtaken by Staunton. It was an off-night with him, and he took the opportunity to inflame the demon of jealousy in his breast by strong potations. His speech was almost inarticulate as he muttered:

"That cur Raneleigh had a sinister object in joining our company, Halstead; and I mean to defeat it at all hazards."

"I do not understand you," I said coldly, for his society was particularly repugnant to me at that moment.

"Oh, yes, you do understand me," he answered with drunken insolence; "your friend Mr. Raneleigh is a scoundrel, and he has won Carrie Chamberlain's love for the basest purpose."

"I do not care to listen to this nonsense," I said. "My friend Mr. Raneleigh I believe to be a worthy and an honorable gentleman."

"Oh! of course he is," was the sneering retort; "but like Cassio, you see, he is 'framed to make women false.' I tell you I have the evidence of his villainous intentions," he cried hoarsely.

"Pshaw! Staunton, you are a trifle melodramatic in your virtuous indignation. Go home and sleep, my boy, and wake in better temper. A man is not necessarily a scoundrel because he supplants one with the girl one loves."

The days passed on, and Earle Staunton was steadily drifting on the downward grade. At last the manager was obliged to reprimand him sharply, for stupid from drink he had forgotten his lines, and compromised the success of our performance on more than one occasion. Believe me, he is essentially a weak man who seeks solace in the wine cup for a woman's fickleness.

It was our last night at Smalltown, and Miss Chamberlain's benefit. A week before we had all learnt of her engagement to Roy Raneleigh. They were to be married on the return of the company to London, and both looked forward with the glowing anticipations of youth and love to the day when their lives should be inseparably interwoven.

The play was *Romeo and Juliet*, and Carrie looked a very lovely heroine as she stood beside her handsome lover before the curtain was rung up. I would not willingly play the eavesdropper to a lovers' *tête-à-tête*, but I could not avoid hearing the following conversation.

"Dear Roy, I wish you were playing Romeo to-night. I cannot understand why you should have chosen Mercutio instead, when—when——"

"Why do you pause, my love? When you are the Juliet, you would say. My fair Carrie, our love is something too sacred in my thoughts to parade it on the stage to-night in acting the lovers. And then Mercutio is a part in which it is so hard to reach the ideal of the Shakespearian critic. I have been always ambitious to play Mercutio, Carrie."

"Ah! Roy, even when a man loves, his heart owns a divided allegiance. How different it is with a woman!"

As he drew the little head down on his breast and kissed the golden hair that crowned it, a cry of rage, but ill-suppressed, escaped the lips of Earle Staunton. He was standing by my side dressed as Tybalt, his hand clutched tightly his rapier's hilt.

His face was of an ashen paleness, and his bloodshot eyes, inflamed with drink and passion, glared with the fury of a wild beast's on the unconscious lovers.

Shocked and disgusted beyond expression I turned away without addressing him, and took my place beside the prompter's desk.

The opening scenes passed over tamely, but on the balcony Juliet won her way into the hearts of her audience, and Roy Raneleigh, standing in the wings, lost not a graceful gesture of the girlish figure, not an intonation of the sweetly modulated voice that told the story of a coy, impassioned love. I have seen many Mercutios in the course of a long professional career, but never anything finer than Raneleigh's rendition of that difficult part.

He gave the Queen Mab speech with excellent judgment, and rare felicity of expression, but he fairly roused the house in that scene where Romeo declines the quarrel that Tybalt would thrust upon him.

How superbly he declaimed the lines:

> Oh, calm, dishonourable, vile submission!
> A la staccata carries it away;
> Tybalt, you rat-catcher, will you walk?

How vividly the scene that followed arises before my mental vision to-night! At his cue Tybalt rushed back to the stage. The few intervening words of the text were spoken. A clash of glittering steel, a murderous thrust from Tybalt's blade, and Mercutio sank back into Benvolio's arms, pierced through the breast.

Trembling with horror, I lowered the curtain hurriedly as Staunton rushed past me with the bloodstained rapier in his hand.

Dashing across the stage, I tore apart the pale blue velvet doublet that Raneleigh wore. It was dappled with his heart's blood, and a sob burst from my lips.

He looked up in my face, and while a wan smile played round his mouth he murmured the words which now had a terrible reality:

"'Tis not as deep as a well, nor as wide as a church door; but 'tis enough."

They were the last words he ever uttered, for three minutes later he was dead.

After the lapse of so many years I cannot recall without a shudder the awe-inspiring, speechless grief of Carrie Chamberlain, as she sank upon the breast of her murdered lover. We found Earle Staunton in the dressing room, and in his death agony. "The ruling passion is strong in death." In true dramatic fashion, he had fallen on his own sword, and thus expiated the murder he had committed in the frenzy of unrequited love.

But you would learn the fate of the heroine of this story.

No; she did not die of a broken heart. A woman's heart is very sensitive and susceptible to tender impressions, but that organ of her sex is tough, sir, very tough, and warranted to survive a great deal of wear and tear of emotional feeling.

I have found Mrs. Halstead, *née* Carrie Chamberlain, an excellent woman, who has never allowed the memory of an early love to interfere with her duties and responsibilities as a faithful wife.

J. Maclaren.

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THE MAN WHO WAS TOO SURE.

"How can you tolerate it, Lu?" exclaimed Mrs. Gorman. "If he *is* my brother, I say it is a shame!" Then, allowing her listener no time to reply, the energetic little lady rattled on: "I suppose you and Clarence must have an understanding, or you would have discharged him long ago. Here has Sidney Lawrence been waiting and serving you no less patiently than Jacob for Rachel, these seven years and more, and yet my recreant brother is the favoured one.

"Unless you take him in hand soon your roses and lilies will wither, and even faithful Sidney will come to worship at a younger, fairer shrine. Everyone supposes that you and Clarence are engaged, and yet he has never in so many words made you an offer of marriage.

"Now, while we know that he considers you his betrothed, he does not seem to realise the embarrassing position in which this tedious courtship places you, and should therefore be brought to a knowledge of it, or punished for his delinquency."

During the earlier portion of her friend's remarks a smile hovered round Lulu Brandon's lips, and she continued her task of cutting the leaves of the last new magazine; but as the final sentence was pronounced her face flushed deeply.

"My private affairs need not concern the public, Belle," she replied with dignity. "But I agree with you that I have been too patient. I acknowledge myself to be considerably at fault, for I proved an easy conquest, and Clarence may have grown lukewarm in his affection, feeling so secure of mine. Of course, a word or two from me and I might become a wife within the next month; but all such words must come from my lord himself."

Her brief displeasure gone, with a laugh she rose and linked her arm in that of her friend, and drawing her to a cosy sofa in one corner of the room, proceeded to formulate plans by which she should bring her lover to terms without his knowledge of her conspiracy.

That evening, at tea, Mr. Clarence Curtis suddenly inquired:

"Been over to the Brandons' to-day, Belle?"

"Yes; and, by the way, Clarence, Lu requested me to tell you not to call this evening, as she will be engaged."

"All right, sis; I'll go round to the theatre with Roberts."

There was a significant twinkle in her eyes as Mr. Gorman rejoined:

"I hope you'll enjoy the play. The Kendals are drawing large houses."

Two hours later Mr. Clarence Curtis was leisurely scanning the crowded theatre, bowing to those he recognised, when, just previous to the rising of the curtain, his friend Roberts exclaimed:

"Why, as I live, there's Sid Lawrence! Who knew he had returned? I wonder who the lady is! Can it be possible? It's Miss Brandon! I never supposed she would accept any other escort save yourself. What is it, Curtis, a lover's quarrel?"

Veiling his surprise with a forced smile, Curtis nonchalantly replied:

"Not to my knowledge." Then he added, somewhat impatiently, "I am no ogre. Lu has a right to go where and with whom she pleases."

In spite of the indifferent manner and careless tone, Roberts noted that his theatre-loving friend took far less interest in the play than in the couple who occupied one of the boxes nearly opposite to where they were seated.

Lu had surely never looked so exquisitely dainty and beautiful as to-night. She seemed the embodiment of health, all aglow with happiness. Yet the lovely face and graceful figure irritated him by the very beauty of which he had always been proud. This radiant piece of flesh and blood did not seem so exactly his property as formerly. Was it because Sidney Lawrence was so attentive?

They had been children together, Sid and Lu, and he knew she had always regarded the studious, dignified boy and man as an elder brother, while she gave the love of her young heart to his comrade and chum.

How well he recalled the days, years ago, when Sid had told him with sad eyes and tremulous voice that Lulu had rejected him! He comforted him as best he could, selfishly exulting in the thought that he possessed her love unasked, unsought. Strange that his possession never seemed quite so valuable as to-night! He wondered what Sidney was saying to make her smile

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and blush so deeply. Well, the act would soon be over, and then he and Roberts would go and see them, and so give the public to understand that matters were as usual between him and Miss Brandon.

With this thought he resolutely turned his attention to the stage, and perseveringly held it there until the curtain fell. Then, turning to Roberts, he proposed that they should go over to the opposite box.

As they entered it Sidney greeted them in his usual sincere and hearty manner, while Lulu, with a smile, gave her hand first to Clarence and then to Roberts, at the same time motioning her lover to a seat by her side.

As Roberts for a few moments engaged Sidney in conversation, Curtis managed to ask Miss Brandon why she had not informed him of her desire to come to the theatre. She frankly replied that she had felt no special wish to do so until Sidney unexpectedly called and asked her to accompany him.

This she told him with a manner so devoid of coquetry that he felt reassured, and left her with a complacent feeling that he was quite sure of her affection.

He called to see her the next evening as usual, and nothing was said of the recent incident. Clarence's brief jealousy was forgotten, and he calmly accepted the old conditions of things. Why should he be in haste to marry even the most charming girl in the world?

He hesitated to give up the freedom and luxury of bachelorhood for the restraints which marriage must inevitably bring. Lulu was such a delightful companion and sweetheart! Would she be equally charming as a wife? Whether or not she wished to marry he never conjectured. He had always lived for his own comfort, and self was his first consideration. So when he left her that evening the words were still unspoken which would bind her to him, and he was yet a free man.

A fortnight passed as usual, with no change in the relations of the two. Lulu was a proud girl, and Mrs. Gorman's look of inquiry every time they now met was hard to bear. Matters reached a climax on the day when Belle incautiously said:

"I have been scolding Clarence about you, Lulu. I tell him he will rue his indifference when it is too late."

"Indeed!" Lulu's laugh was rather forced. "And what did my lover say?"

"Oh! that he was sure of you, or something of that sort. He is abominably conceited, though he is my brother."

"Are not all men so?" asked Lulu lightly, but her eyes were like sparks.

When at eight o'clock next evening Clarence called to see Miss Brandon, the maid informed him that she had just "gone out with Mr. Lawrence." Again the green-eyed monster seized the tardy wooer, and this time it wonderfully quickened his latent love.

He resolved to ask the important question at once. Early the next morning he went to the home of his sweetheart, only to find that she had gone out for the day. Clarence was seriously disturbed. He felt that something was wrong. If he could only see Lulu for a few minutes matters would be settled to his satisfaction, he assured himself. But, alas! that little word "if" has often proved a barrier stronger than prison walls or iron bands.

For weeks he was baffled in every attempt to see Miss Brandon alone, until he was forced to admit that she purposely sought to evade a meeting with him. This only made him more eager and determined to bring one about, but more than two months elapsed before he succeeded in securing the long and much desired interview.

At last he wrote her a note, requesting somewhat imperatively to be allowed to see her privately. The reply was brief, simply stating that she would receive him that evening at 8 o'clock.

Promptly at the time designated Clarence entered the familiar room, and was greeted cordially by Lu, who yet evaded the accustomed lover-like caress.

"'Great minds run in the same channel,' Clarence. At the moment I received your note I was writing you an invitation to call."

This little speech quickly dissipated the suspicion which had risen in his mind at his reception, and he resolved to state the object of his call without delay.

"Dear Lulu," he said, taking her hand in his, "I have come this evening to ask you to name an early date for our marriage. I want my wife as soon as possible."

She allowed him to retain her hand, but the crimson deepened upon her fair cheeks as she replied:

"Clarence, I have something to say which may give you pain. During the last few years I have been dimly conscious that we are not exactly suited to each other, although a month ago I should have indignantly refuted such an implication from anyone else. I am now fully convinced that if united we should not be happy. More than this," here she spoke very softly and tenderly, "I have been mistaken in the object of my affection, and I know that I have never truly loved anyone but Sidney Lawrence."

Speechless and pale Clarence's eyes sought hers beseechingly. At last he realised the magnitude of his love for the woman his selfishness had put for ever from his life. But he read no hope in her face and in silence he rose and left her.

Years have passed since then. Clarence Curtis has never married, and the gossips say the handsome bachelor silently worships the wife of Sidney Lawrence.

PERCY GOODMAN.

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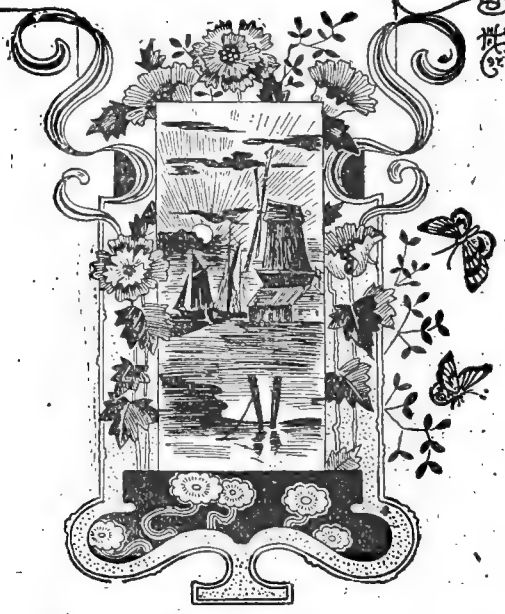
THE FOUNDING OF MATANZAS.



There was once upon a time a man who led a very merry life, taking no thought of the morrow; and since to run in debt without having the means to pay is the sure road to the poor-house, in a very short time our hero was left with nothing he could call his own but thirty days in the month, and with nothing to exercise his teeth upon but his nails.

So that little by little he fell into such a state of dejection that he would allow his wife to beat him and his children to abuse him when he returned home at night empty-handed, without uttering a word in protest.

Finally, he grew tired of his life, and, borrowing a rope from one of his cronies, he went into a field to hang himself.

Having fastened one end of the rope to an olive tree, he was about to put the other round his neck when there appeared before him a dwarf, attired in a friar's robe and cowl, who said to him quietly:

"What is that you are going to do, my good man?"

"Cannot your worship see what I am going to do? To hang myself," he answered.

"So you, a Christian, are going to do what Judas did? Stop; that isn't right. Take this purse, which is never empty, and relieve your necessities."

Taking the purse from the dwarf's hand, Uncle Curro, for such was our hero's name, took a peseta out of it, and then another and another, until he saw that, like the words coming out of a woman's mouth, there seemed to be no end to them. Seeing which, he untied the rope from the tree, rolled it up, and started for home.

On the road there was a tavern, which he entered, and calling for the best the house could afford in meat and drink, he paid the score on the spot, for the tavern-keeper, knowing him of old, would not trust him to so large an amount, and he ate and ate, and drank and drank, until finally he fell off his chair and rolled under the table quite intoxicated.

The tavern-keeper, who had seen that the purse from which Uncle Curro had taken the money remained as full as before, told his wife to make another purse like it, and when this was done he took Uncle Curro's purse from his pocket and put in its place the one his wife had made.

When Uncle Curro awoke he set out again for home, where he arrived as merry as a cricket.

"Rejoice!" he cried to his wife and children. "Here is money in plenty; our days of poverty are over."

He put his hand into his pocket, and took it out again—empty; he put it in again, and again he took it out empty.

When his wife saw this she was so enraged that she gave him a blow that sent him spinning.

More dejected than ever, Uncle Curro again took the rope, and went once more into the fields to hang himself. Arrived at the same spot as before, he was proceeding to tie the rope to a branch of the same tree when he heard a voice near by saying:

"What is that you are going to do, good man?" and lifting up his eyes he saw before him the dwarf, seated astride a branch of the olive tree.

"To hang myself, like a string of garlic from a kitchen rafter," answered Uncle Curro very coolly.

"So you have lost your patience again?" said the dwarf.

"And no wonder," replied Uncle Curro, "when I have nothing to eat."

"That is your own fault, entirely your own fault. But never mind. Come here. Take this table-cloth, and so long as you keep it in your possession you shall never want for something to eat."

So saying, the dwarf handed Uncle Curro a table-cloth, and then disappeared among the branches of the olive tree. Uncle Curro spread the table-cloth on the ground, which he had no sooner done than it was covered with the richest viands, so exquisitely prepared, that not the king's cook himself could have surpassed them. Of course Uncle Curro ate until he could eat no longer, and then, folding his table-cloth, he put it in his pocket and set out for home.

Stopping to rest at the same inn as before, he was overcome with sleep, and lay down to take a nap. The innkeeper, who recognised him at once, suspected that he had something of value with him, and cautiously taking the table-cloth out of his pocket, he put in its stead the soiled cloth from the table of the inn.

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When Curro reached home, he cried out to his wife and children:

"Come, come and eat; and this time, take my word for it, there shall be no disappointment." Then he unfolded the table-cloth, which, instead of viands, was seen to be covered with stains of all sizes and of every colour. At this the storm broke loose. Wife and children fell upon him and beat him, until they left him a fit subject for the hospital.

Uncle Curro took a rope, and went again into the fields to hang himself. This time he persisted in his purpose of hanging himself, and the dwarf persisted in his that he should not.

At last the little friar ended the discussion by giving Uncle Curro a cudgel, telling him that with that in his hands he need never be troubled by anyone again, and that all he had to do was to say:

"Cudgel, lay about you!" for everyone to run away from him, and leave him in peace and quiet.

Uncle Curro took the road home with his cudgel, as proud as an alcalde with his wand of office, and the moment he saw his children coming toward him, asking for something to eat, with insulting and abusive words as they were accustomed to see their mother do, he said to his cudgel:

"Cudgel, lay about you!"

No sooner had he pronounced the words than the cudgel began to shower blows to right and left among the children, until they had scarcely a whole bone left in their bodies.

His wife ran to her children's assistance.

"At her, cudgel!" said Uncle Curro: "at her and with a will!"

And the cudgel belaboured the wife so unmercifully that she died of her injuries.

The authorities being notified, the alcalde, accompanied by his officers, presented himself upon the scene.

"Cudgel, lay about you!" said Uncle Curro, as soon as they appeared; and the cudgel proceeded to deal such lusty blows among them that every blow was worth a peseta; so that the alcalde was killed and the officers took to their heels and were out of sight in a trice.

A messenger was sent to the King to inform him of what was going on, and the King sent a regiment of grenadiers to seize Uncle Curro and his cudgel. No sooner did Uncle Curro see them approach than, throwing the cudgel among their ranks, he cried:

"Cudgel, lay about you!"

And the cudgel straightway began to dance upon the ribs of the grenadiers, making a noise like the clapper of a mill. One it left lame; another with a disabled arm; and the Captain it left blind of an eye.

To make an end of the business, the grenadiers all threw their guns and knapsacks on the ground and ran off helter-skelter, as if they thought Old Nick had broken loose and was running after them.

With his mind at rest, Uncle Curro lay down to take a nap, hiding his cudgel in his breast, lest it should be stolen from him during his sleep.

When he awoke he found himself bound hand and foot and on his way to prison, where, on his arrival, he was sentenced to the ignominious death of the garrote.

On the following morning he was taken from his cell and led out to execution. On the scaffold his hands were unbound, whereupon he took out his cudgel, and saying:

"Cudgel, lay about you!" he threw it at the executioner, who was quickly beaten by it to death.

"Set that man free!" said the King, "or he will not leave me a subject alive; tell him that I will give him a province in the West Indies on condition that he shall leave the country."

And thus it was done. The King gave him a province in the island of Cuba, where he built a city; and there he killed so many people with his cudgel that from that day to this it has been called Matanzas (the Spanish for slaughter).

Fernan Caballero.

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A Saurian Slaughter.

About forty miles above the city of Allahabad, India, there was a village called Gznai. In January, 1869, it was a place of 1,500 inhabitants. It was not built in a day exactly, but it sprang into life and attained over 500 inhabitants within thirty days. Thirty days later the population numbered 1,500. In the course of another thirty days not an inhabitant was left, and vines and plants were taking root in the principal street.

Gznai was what is known as a "crocodile town." Up to the year 1880 that religious sect which for a thousand years had lived along the Ganges and its tributaries was permitted to found these "crocodile towns," or at least the fanatical leaders were not amenable to law. The English discouraged them in many ways, but it was not until the year named that the law dealt them a death-blow. The religion of the Juggernaut appealed only to half mad fanatics.

The "crocodile faith," as it was called, was a mixture of avarice, selfishness, revenge and religion. Gznai was founded on the bank of a small lake. This lake was inhabited by crocodiles. The founder was a wandering "holy man," and no sooner was it known that he had erected his tent and "blessed" the lake than there was a rush of natives to the place.

The matter was kept secret from the British as long as possible, but when the news finally reached Allahabad preparations were promptly made for breaking up the town. About 180 native troops under charge of two British officers were sent down by boats to scatter the fanatics, and through the courtesy of Captain McArthur I was allowed to accompany the expedition.

Many horrible things had happened before we reached Gznai. Any native who wanted to be rid of wife, children, father or mother had only to convey them to the town. They were "blessed" by the old fakir in consideration of a sum of money amounting to about 2d. per head. After the blessing they were flung to the saurians. The man who wanted to be rid of an enemy could do it very cheaply, and in many instances it was done to save paying debts. A lover jealous of another denounced him to the fakir as an unbeliever, and the fakir sent out men from his bodyguard to capture him. The village had been founded eighty-seven days when we reached it, and as near as we could learn, over three hundred people had been food to the crocodiles, and we found fifty-two others held captive and waiting for death.

One of the queer things about India is the universal belief of the natives that what is to be will be, and that no one dies before his time. Everyone, poisoner and robber, has a religion. If "blessed" by an old hypocrite of a fakir a minute before death, he is happy in the belief that his soul will find rest.

Of all the captives brought to Gznai, not one had been bound or guarded. The fakir had placed his hand on their heads and announced that they would find supreme bliss in the future state, and after that they wandered about as they willed, but had no thought of escape.

When we entered the village, some of them threw themselves into the lake without orders, and others had to be driven homeward by switches.

Of the 1,500 people in the village, about one-third were rogues and rascals, gathered there to prey on the gullible. Another third supplied food and drink, and the remainder were fanatics and enthusiasts, ready to obey any command issued by the head fakir. The old rascal was making a good thing of it financially, and just before our arrival had raised his rates 50 per cent. Victims had been brought to him from a distance of sixty miles.

We reached the village at three o'clock in the afternoon. At noon that day ten persons had been given up to the crocodiles. The excitement kicked up by our arrival was intense, as every native realised what the result would be. The first move was to escort the head fakir half a mile out of town and start him off with a warning of arrest and imprisonment if he returned. The wealth he had acquired was then distributed among the captives awaiting death. At the same moment the soldiers were passing round with a switch in one hand and a firebrand in the other, and every hut and tent was soon in flames and the people scattered.

Among the captives was a man about thirty years old, who had been chief of a village twenty miles away. His own brother, a young man of twenty, had denounced him and assisted in his capture. The ex-chief had been "blessed," and was to die at sundown. To prevent him plunging into the lake, he was tied to a tree, and an hour later, when he still refused to go home, two of the soldiers made ready to "lick the religion out of him," as they termed it.

With pliant switches they cut away at his bare back for fully ten minutes before he uttered a yell. When the yell came, however, he was ready to give in and announce that he would head for home, and not tarry on the way. The most curious part of the affair was that the brother who had given him up to death stood there and witnessed the whipping, and they went off in company when it was over.

Before sundown the village had been made desolate; but the work was only half done. The orders were to remove the crocodiles and the lake as well as the people. If the first two remained, some other fakir would found another village within a year.

Next morning a survey was made of the shores of the lake. It was a body of water about six acres in extent with an average depth of ten feet, and there was every evidence that it had been a reservoir for irrigation purposes. The east shore was steep and comparatively clear, but on the other sides the bushes grew close to the water. After a tramp of two hours it was discovered that the whole lake could be drained by cutting a ditch four feet deep and eighty feet long.

Native boats were constantly passing up and down the river, and from these the captain secured a force to handle the picks and shovels. Where this ditch began a strong wooden frame was set up to prevent the

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crocodiles from passing down with the rush of the water.

The saurians had had possession of that lake for scores if not hundreds of years, and the place was literally packed with them.

While the ditch was being dug, Captain McArthur sent a report to Allahabad, and after a couple of days a six-pound fieldpiece, with plenty of ammunition, was sent up to him. His idea was to exterminate the last saurian in that lake, and the work could not have been done by the soldiers' muskets. While we were waiting for the ditch to be opened a native appeared, and asked for an interview with the captain. He introduced himself as a native doctor living in a village about fifteen miles away. On the day that we drove the people out of the village he was being brought in as a captive. When set at liberty, he became filled with anxiety. He had been denounced and captured, but not "blessed" by the fakir. He was, therefore, at a loss to know what to do. Should he return home as if never denounced? Should he hunt for the fakir, and get a blessing, or should he throw himself to the crocodiles, and take the chances of its being the proper thing to do? The man was very much in earnest and would not have gone away satisfied without receiving advice, and after a little thought the captain said to him:

"Perhaps it will be well to have two of my men whip you. I think you will feel easier in your mind after that."

The native agreed that the "experiment" was worth trying, and a couple of the soldiers cut switches, and gave him a beautiful dressing-down. They must have struck fifty blows before he turned to the captain, and said:

"Sahib, it is well with me. I now see my way clearly. I shall return to my village and be as if nothing had happened."

The men gave him three or four extra cuts to bind the bargain, and the fellow went off, with a smile on his face.

The ditch was all ready one morning after breakfast. It seemed as if the crocodiles scented danger, for they began rushing about in a furious manner. The soldiers and natives were stationed about the lake to drive back any of the reptiles which might seek the land, and presently the water began rushing down the ditch and flowing over a plain.

The lake had not been lowered more than a foot when there was a grand rush to escape by the ditch. The cannon was planted within fifty feet of the spot, and three or four shells fired into the struggling mass broke it up. Every crocodile in the lake went to the bottom, and stayed there until only about two feet of water remained to cover them. There was but little mud, and no hiding places.

We expected to see a general rush for the banks, and fires had been lighted at several points to assist in checking it. But the rush we anticipated did not take place. Instead of that there was a battle such as few men ever looked upon. Captain McArthur officially reported "about 300" crocodiles in that lake, but he agreed that the number might be one hundred more. There were no young ones at all, and but few which could be called half grown. The great majority were full grown, and no man had ever seen larger ones in India.

While the lake was a drinking place for thousands of wild animals, many of which naturally fell victims to the saurians, it was evident that the supply of food had been eked out by devouring the small fry. Not a fish or turtle was to be seen, and of the victims cast into the water in the name of faith not so much as a bone remained.

As the water was lowered and the crocodiles realised the situation, they began to fight so fiercely and vengefully that many of the natives ran away in alarm. Mud and gravel and water were thrown over the bushes and into the tree tops as the saurians thrashed about, and the hissing, bellowing, and clashing of jaws made a rumpus which was heard a mile away.

Half-an-hour after the fight began not a gallon of water was left in the lake, and then we had a clear view of the raging battle. The smaller and weaker were naturally killed off first. In a few instances large or small crocodiles left the bed of the lake and sought to escape into the jungle or make their way toward the river, but they were fired upon by the soldiers and driven back. Not a single one of them got away.

At three o'clock in the afternoon there were only about twenty crocodiles left alive, and these were the largest of the lot. Exhausted with the long and continued conflict, and each one more or less severely wounded, these survivors crept to the centre of the lake as if to rest. It was then that the fieldpiece opened on them with shell, and as the first one exploded among them the battle was renewed. The soldiers gathered with their muskets, and between shell and bullet the last saurian was soon disposed of.

The very last one to be killed was perhaps the oldest and largest of the lot. He had been wounded some years back on the top of his head and marked in a curious manner. In his death agonies he had crawled half way up the bank, and he died with his mouth open.

One of the soldiers cut a stick and placed it between his jaws to keep them open, and we were knocking out some of the teeth as relics when a native pushed his way through the crowd and said to the captain:

"Sahib, I would ask a great favour of you. If you do not grant it, I shall wish to die."

"Well, what is it?"

"The village numbered only 100 people when I brought my wife here to be blessed and thrown into the lake. She was a good woman, but of late she had talked too much. She had become curious minded. If I set out on a journey she wished to know my destination. If I was thoughtful, she wished to know if I was ill. If I was jolly, she asked me if good luck had come."

"Well?"

"And so I brought her here to be disposed of. I saw her blessed, and I saw her flung into the lake. That big crocodile got her. I knew him by that mark on his head. I now ask you for one of his teeth."

"Help yourself," replied the captain.

"Thanks, sahib. I will ever bless you. After thinking matters all over I have come to the conclusion that my wife was not such a bad woman after all. I think I was a little hasty in the matter. I will take a tooth and bury it on a hill in her memory and shall then feel all right about it."

With a stone he knocked out a tooth, repeated his thanks, and disappeared in the jungle, and as he vanished the other natives called after him:

"Ah, but he is a good man! When he has had his wife eaten by crocodiles, he does not forget that she had many virtues."

C. W. P.

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A WOLF HUNT.

A FEW years ago Prince Repnine, with two companions, engaged in a wolf hunt, which brought them more than the danger and excitement they calculated on, and came within an ace of being their last hunt.

The party set out one evening in a large sleigh; each hunter was armed with a double-barrelled gun and a hundred and fifty cartridges. The Prince commanded the road, and his companions took charge, one of each flank.

On reaching the steppe, an immense desert covered with snow, the coachman shook his reins, the horses broke into a canter, the pig began to squeal, a few wolves howled in response, and before long the hunters saw the shadowy forms of half a score of them following in the rear; but they were few in number and maintained a respectful distance, waiting for reinforcements.

But gradually their numbers increased, and they approached the sleigh, which was gliding at an easy but moderate pace over the snow, the coachman holding the excited horses well in hand. A band of at least twenty wolves was allowed to come to close quarters before the firing was commenced. A shot was fired, a wolf fell; there was great excitement, and apparently disorganisation of the troop, and it appeared to the hunters that their pursuers had been diminished one half.

In fact, seven or eight of the more famished brutes had remained behind to feast on their fallen comrade, but their ranks were soon full again; on all sides one heard howlings responded to by howlings; on all sides wolves sprang up as if out of the snow, their sharp noses showing themselves between their glowing eyes. They were at close quarters now, and numerous enough and the three hunters maintained a rolling fire into their ranks; but, although every ball hit, the band continued to increase.

Before long the troop was swollen to vast numbers, which began to crowd upon the sleigh: the pace increased with the excitement and the vast cavalcade flew over the snow, silent as death but for the dismal howlings of wolves. With their centre a few yards in the rear of the sleigh, the troops formed themselves into a crescent, the two horns of which were far in advance of the horses on either side.

The pig, which had been stimulated to squeal, was now kept as quiet as possible; the unexpected number of wolves foreboded danger, and at every cry of the pig their fury and audacity was redoubled. The firing was maintained without intermission, but already the hunters had fired away half their cartridges. There remained only about two hundred between the three of them, and they were surrounded by more than a thousand wolves.

The two horns of the living crescent began now to draw towards each other; the wolves were evidently acting in accordance with a concerted plan. They were bent on forming a circle which should inclose their prey in its centre, and gradually close in upon them till escape would be hopeless; for if only one of the horses were brought down, resistance could hardly be prolonged another minute. The horses snorted, screamed, and plunged frightfully, but nothing gave way, and the coachman maintained his control over them.

"What do you think of it, Ivan?" asked the Prince of his coachman.

"The enraged brutes have tasted blood," he said, "and the longer you continue firing the more their numbers increase. If you will leave it to me, Prince, I will turn the horses' heads homewards, and give them their heads."

"Can you rely upon them?"

"I will answer for them."

"And you will be responsible for us?"

The coachman did not reply; he saw the critical moment had arrived in which the Prince and his friends, awed by the growing terror of their situation, were not unwilling to see him take the command. Without another word he wheeled gradually round in the direction of the château, and gave the horses their heads. The noble brutes, wild with terror and excitement, no sooner felt their heads free than they bounded off at a furious pace, the sleigh scarcely seeming to hamper their movements.

The coachman, letting the horses go at their best speed, continued to wheel them round, and almost in an instant they charged down upon the flanks of the wolves, which scattered right and left as the horses plunged among them.

The horses were not galloping now; they were flying. At this moment the hunters raised their guns for another shot.

"For your lives," cried Ivan, "don't fire!"

They obeyed.

And now it was seen that the wolves had come to a standstill; they were evidently nonplussed by the unexpected manœuvre; their tactics had been spoilt, and they did not know what to do next.

In this minute of indecision the horses, straining at top speed, had shot nearly half a mile ahead, and when the wolves had renewed their pursuit they appeared to follow but slowly; the huntsmen soon ceased to fear that the wolves would overtake them.

But there was no slackening speed, and a quarter-of-an-hour later our hunters entered the courtyard of the château. The Prince estimated that in this quarter-of-an-hour the horses had covered a distance of six miles, but a severe critic might remark that he probably did not look at his watch until some minutes after the start.

The following day the Prince and his party visited the field of battle on horseback, and the bones of two hundred wolves attested to the steadiness of their shooting, and to the number that were present at the banquet.

A. L. T.

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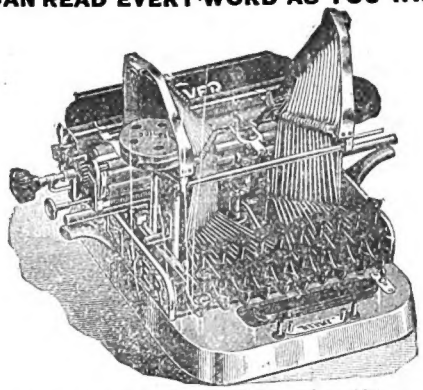

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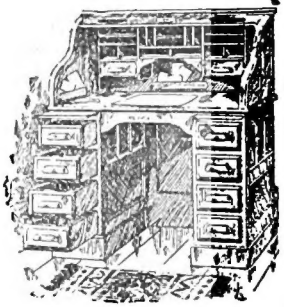

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A. A sum of from **10/-** to **20/-** per week offered for spare time to either sex everywhere. Work can be done evenings. Send addressed envelope to Box 60, Eclipse Works, 89, Aldersgate Street, London, E.C.

£20

Hairdressers fitted up. Estimates free.

Tobacconists Commencing. See Illd. Guide (259 pages) 3d. How to open a cigar store, £20 to £2,000 **Tobacconists Outfitting Co.**, 186, Euston Road, London. The largest and original house (50 years reputation. Mgr., H. Myers

SILVER QUEEN CYCLES!

Best Value on Earth. Immense stock of Ladies' and Gents' machines. New and Secondhand. Wonderful bargains. Carriage paid. Easy payments from 10s. monthly, or large cash discount. 1 year's guarantee. Illus. price lists post free on application. Old cycles exchanged The SILVER QUEEN CYCLE Co Ltd., 221 Tottenham Court Road, London.

ATLAS LOCKSTITCH MACHINE.

Works by hand or treadle. Guaranteed 4 years. Equal in quality and size to any machine. To ensure satisfaction, we will send machine on receipt of 5/-. P.O. for ONE MONTH'S TRIAL. Balance can be paid 5/- Monthly. Call or write for designs and Samples of work. **39/-**

THE ATLAS SEWING MACHINE CO., 188B, High St., Camden Town, London, N.W. 63 Seven Sisters Road, N.; 14 High Rd., Kilburn.

The Best Hair Dye

In the World for Lashes, Eyebrows, and Hair on the Head, with Moustache and Beard. For Ladies' Hair and for all Colours. Had at 3s. 6d., post 3s. 9d., of ALEX. ROSS, 62, Theobald's Road, High Holborn, London, W.C. Spanish Cantharides for fallen hair, 3s. 6d. 5s. 6d. & 10s. 6d.

NOSE MACHINE.

This is a contrivance by which the short cartilage of the nose is pressed into shape by wearing the instrument an hour daily for a short time. Price 10/6, sent free for stamps. ALEX ROSS, 62, Theobald's Road, London, opposite Bedford Row. Est. 1850. Parcel free from observation.

The Lustre Lasts!

Pyn-Ka Leaves no Scratches!

Pyn-Ka

The wonderful Metal Polisher. Cleans and burnishes gold, silver, plate, copper, brass, nickel, tin, glass, etc., better, quicker, and at less cost of labour and money than any other polish known.

Paste or tablets, 1d. to 6d. All dealers.

FREE FREE

OUR

£21 BICYCLES £21

to every person taking advantage of this advertisement and the offer we will send. The Bicycle is packed in a wood crate, and is sent to your address FREE of any monetary charge, with one exception, that you pay carriage to railway company when you receive the Bicycle. We are giving these machines away as a *startling advertisement*, feeling assured that after you receive the Bicycle you will recommend us to all your friends as being a firm to be relied on for honest, straightforward dealings.

£21 BICYCLES £21

For 1s. 6d. we will forward our Gents' Epingle de Cravate, or Ladies' Broché together with our offer, and on your complying with offer, the Bicycle is forwarded Free of Charge as above stated. To save any disappointment, we will refund money in full to any person sending in, after all the Bicycles have been *given away*.

Send stamped addressed envelope together with P.O. or stamps for 1s. 6d.

THE ANGLO-AMERICAN AGENCY (Dept. 31), **196 St. Vincent Street. GLASGOW.**

SULPHOLINE LOTION,

For clearing the skin from Spots, Blemishes, Redness, Roughness, giving a Beautiful Complexion and pleasing appearance.

SHILLING BOTTLES.

"JUNO" CYCLES ARE THE VERY BEST.

CASH DISC & CARRIAGE PAID

Monthly
Roadster, £10. 16/
Road Racer, £11. 18/
Lady & Gent, £12 12/- 21/
£14 14/- 24/
£16 16/- 28/
Write for New Season's List of JUNO Cycles and Accessories sent post free

METROPOLITAN MACHINISTS' CO. LTD., 75 and 76 Bishopsgate Without, London, E.C.; and at Piccadilly Circus exactly opposite the Criterion, London, W. JUNO Riding School, 1,700ft.

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YOU AND I.

C. N. B.—If your father was naturalised while you were a minor and living with him, this naturalised you at the same time.

CYCLE.—The order forbidding ladies to ride the bicycle in the streets of Petersburg has been cancelled, and the wheel is making progress in that country, but it is not an ideal place for cyclists on account of the too paternal solicitude of the Muscovite authorities. The would-be cyclist has to pass sundry examinations to prove that he is competent before he is allowed to ride about as he likes. And when that ordeal has been passed, riders of both sexes are ticketed with a prominent and unsightly label, setting forth the due qualifications for permission to cycle.

HOOF.—The camel's foot is like a soft cushion, and is peculiarly adapted for walking over gravel and stones. During a journey in the Sahara, the horses of British officers had to be shod three times, but the feet of the camels were not even sore.

SCHOOL.—No, it is Münster, with two dots over the u. It is in Westphalia. The public school which you mention was originally a convent school, and has just celebrated the eleven hundredth anniversary of its foundation.

CHAM.—Some of the large champagne manufacturers in Epernay have underground cellars extending over forty acres, and containing as many as 5,000,000 bottles of wine. Epernay itself may be described as a subterranean city; its streets for miles are hewn out of the chalk, and flanked with piles of champagne of all blends and qualities.

GLASS.—The single opera-glass was first used in France in the time of Louis XIV. (latter half of the seventeenth century); it became the rage, and everybody used one. The double opera-glass was invented in 1825, but did not at first find favour with the men. There is an old French treatise on the art of ogling or looking through the glass; it is quite a treatise on coquetry, and explains how a woman should hold the glass if she has well-formed arms, nicely-shaped hands, and so on.

SMOKE.—The Dutch hold the record as the champion tobacco smokers. Statistics recently compiled respecting seventeen tobacco-smoking countries show that they get through a larger quantity (per head of the population) than any other civilised nation. Our own country stands fourteenth on the list. Italy, Spain and Switzerland smoke less than we, while France consumes a little more. The United States comes next to Holland.

C. L. D.—The tramways, omnibusses, and underground railways in and around London, within a radius of five miles, carry each year about four hundred and fifty-three million passengers.

IGNORAMUS writes to ask why we call the present century the nineteenth, when we are still using 18—— and not 19——.———In counting by hundreds, from 1 to 100 is the first hundred, and so from 1800 to 1900 is the nineteenth hundred or "century."

THEATRE.—In all the capitals of Europe, except London, at least one theatre is subsidised by the Government.

S. I. G.—The largest advertising sign in the world is, of course, just where you wouldn't expect to find it. It is on the hillside of an islet off the Grand Canary. There are four words; each letter is 30ft. high, and 15ft. wide, and the bars or strokes of the letters are 3ft. 3in. broad. The sign is 750ft. long.

FLY CATCHER.—The best fly-destroyer in the world is the "common or garden" wasp. An expert states that he has known a wasp to kill hundreds of flies in one day. Still, on the whole, I think most people would prefer the flies.

PHIL asks: "Is it true that Luzon, the principal island of the Philippine group, was named after one of the discoverers?"———No. The name comes from the native word "lesong," meaning a rice mortar. When the discoverers inquired the name of the place, the natives replied "lesong," apparently under the impression that the new-comers wished to know the name of the utensils that were lying about. It is generally thought that the natives are of one and the same race with the Malays. The chief amusement of the natives of Manila is cock fighting; many of the men think a great deal more of their birds than of their wives. The Government revenue was appreciably increased by the licensing of cock-pits.

NAPOLEON.—If the statement of a recent writer be correct, Napoleon I had no luxurious tastes in the way of food. His favourite dish was a bean salad, and he thought that half-a-crown a day should be enough for anyone's meals. Louis XV. was just the opposite; he had a favourite dish that was made of the eggs of various birds and cost £20.

ARCTIC.—The fossil forest of Atanekerdluk is in Northern Greenland, about 70 degrees N. latitude. It is the most perfect fossil exhibit in the world. Sixty-six varieties of plant life have been found and recognised. It is so well preserved that on some of the leaves of the trees there have been found remains of the insects that no doubt fed upon them.

DON CARLOS.—A British legion fought in Spain against the adherents of the grandfather of the present Don Carlos. The legion was raised by Sir De Lacy Evans, Lord John Hay, and others with the object of assisting the cause of the infant Queen Isabella. The men of the legion did good work, but they could not get a farthing out of the Spanish Government afterwards for arrears of pay.

PIPE.—The latest reports show that the consumption of tobacco is decreasing in France.

BRIDGE.—The greatest natural bridge in the world spans a chasm in Utah, four miles from the little town of Moab. It is about two hundred feet high, seventy-five feet thick, and has a span of two hundred and fifty feet.

WHISTLER.—The whistling moth is an Australian rarity. There is a glassy space, crossed with ribs, on the wings of the insects; when the moth desires to whistle it strikes these ribs with its antennæ, which have a knob at the end. The sound is used as a call from the male to the female.

NAILS.—Finger nails grow, on the average, rather more than an inch and a half a year.

THE proprietor of the Tallis Court Hotel, Broadstairs, has by him a curiosity which will greatly interest our readers. In one of Lyle's Golden Syrup tins, which had evidently been thrown away, and was found upon the bank opposite his house, a robin had built her nest and laid three eggs; with what delight the loving pair took possession of this highly eligible family residence may be imagined.

SHORT STORIES' ADVERTISEMENT RATES.

Single column, per inch, per insertion	£0	10	0
Double ,, ,, ,,	1	0	0
Full page inside, facing page of matter, either white paper or 2nd or 3rd page of cover, or back page, per insertion	10	0	0
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Eighth-page ,, ,, ...	1	5	0
Front page, whole ,, ,, ...	12	10	0
,, half	6	5	0

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Series discount: 5 per cent. for 13, 10 per cent. for 26, 15 per cent. for 52 insertions.

Black blocks are charged 25 per cent. extra. All advertisements are subject to approval. All copy must be sent in by Noon on Tuesday, June **28th**, if intended for the Issue on sale July **12th**, and dated July **16th**. The Proprietors reserve the right to hold over or suspend the insertion of any advertisement without prejudice to other insertions on order. All communications should be addressed to the Advertisement Manager, "Pearson's Weekly" Offices, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

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FOR HOME DYEING.

MAYPOLE SOAP DYES ANY COLOUR

CLEAN AND QUICK. NO MESS. NO TROUBLE.
WON'T WASH OUT OR FADE.

Silks, Satins, Cottons, Wools, Feathers, Lace,
ALL LOOK LIKE NEW WHEN DYED WITH

MAYPOLE SOAP.

ADVICE FREE BY LETTER ON HOME DYEING

Sold in All Colours, 4d. per Tablet; Black, 6d.

An ILLUSTRATED NOVELETTE, "Three Daughters of Eve," a Charming Book of Nursery Rhymes, in Colours, and an ILLUSTRATED BOOKLET, "Seven Ages of Woman," with Specimen Card of Colours on Satin. Sent Post Free on receipt of address.

Free Advice given upon Home Dyeing by letter. State plainly your requirements, and when possible enclose a small piece of the material you wish to dye.

THE MAYPOLE CO. LIMITED, 98 & 99 HIGH HOLBORN, LONDON, W.C.

KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR.

WHY INDUCE HEART DISEASE TO CURE YOUR HEAD

When you can get a real safe remedy like **KAPUTINE?**

Dr. Thurston, Licentiate, of the Royal College of Physicians, writes November 16th: "Knowing the formulæ from which KAPUTINE is compounded, I unhesitatingly recommend its use in preference to crude Antifibrin and other synthetic drugs which, unfortunately for sufferers, are so commonly used for Headache, and which have undoubtedly injurious effects on the Heart, Brain, and Vescicle tissues generally."

NOTHING LIKE KAPUTINE. NOTHING SIMILAR. NOTHING AS GOOD.

All leading Chemists sell it. Packets of 18 doses 1s. Sample 1d.

After 13 Years' Suffering, Cured for 1s.

The Rev. T. TAYLOR, Vicar of St. Bredward, Cornwall, writes: "Owing to a severe accident while riding, my wife has for the past thirteen years been subject to violent attacks of neuralgia. The relief she has experienced from KAPUTINE has been speedy and effectual. KAPUTINE, while it is efficacious in its use, is attended with none of the disagreeable after effects which she has experienced in the case of other drugs."

After 10 Weeks' Suffering, Cured for 1d.

From Rev. J. H. BURN. DEER RECTORY, MINTLAW, ABERDEEN, NOVEMBER 8TH, 1897.

"My own cure with one dose of KAPUTINE was marvellous after ten weeks incessant neuralgia.

Used also by Her Grace the Countess of Cavan, Lady Dashwood, The Countess of Munster, Surgeon Lieut.-Col. Baker, etc., etc.

Nothing Similar. Nothing as Good. **KAPUTINE CURES HEADACHE IN 10 MINUTES.**

If you enclose stamped envelope to A. M. Kaputine Ltd., Huddersfield, you will get free samples by return.

KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR.

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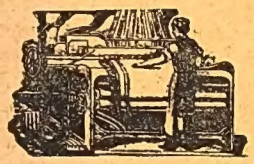
THE WORLD-RENOWNED REDUCTION IN THE PRICE OF CARPETS.

SUPPLEMENTARY, 1898.—The Utilitarian Production of the Age in Carpets! One Million to be distributed to the People of this Realm!

THIS PIONEER OFFER



IS MADE TO READERS OF *SHORT STORIES* ON RECEIPT OF POSTAL ORDER OR STAMPS, VALUE **4s. 6d.** (Regd.) We will send you Direct from the Looms, THE LARGEST GENUINE REVERSIBLE CARPET in BRUSSELS FINISH WITH RUG EVER SOLD AT THE PRICE, to any address on receipt of amount, suitable for drawing-room, bedroom, etc., bordered and woven in Brussels patterns, as an advertisement for my goods, thus saving any middle profit. Remember these are woven, not printed, and are made of a material almost equal to wool. Thousands of these Carpets have been already sold at double these prices. SPECIAL OFFER—**TWO** CARPETS and **TWO** RUGS, **8s.** [Cut this out.]

"We have never seen a cheaper article, the wonder being how the carpet can be made and sold at the ridiculously small sum."—*Exchange and Mart.*——"Wonderful value for money."—*Church Bells.*

Hundreds of favourable Press Notices from the *Christian Globe, Christian World, Christian Age, Rock, Catholic Times*, etc., etc., etc. Greatest bargains ever offered.

Write subject to approval or cash gladly returned. Thousands of repeat orders and testimonials from all parts.

38 Railway Cottages, Willesden, May 25th.

Mrs. Evans writes: "Having had two of your Carpets and Rugs five years ago. They have worn extremely well, being in constant wear. Shall be glad if you will send me two of your "Novel" Carpets and Rugs. P.O. enclosed."

16 Slate Street, Leicester, October 9th.

W. Sawbridge, Esq., writes: "Two or three years ago I purchased one of your Carpets, and we are very pleased with the way it has stood the wear and tear that it has been subjected to. Please send two more Carpets and Rugs as advertised. 8s. enclosed."

ILLUSTRATED BARGAINS CATALOGUES OF CARPETS, HEARTHRUGS, SHEETINGS, TABLE LINEN, CURTAINS, etc., POST FREE.

All orders despatched same day in rotation as they arrive by post.

The "Queen's Royal" Household Carpets and Hearthrugs are extolled by all the Nations of the Earth.

Gigantic Sale of the "QUEEN'S ROYAL" Household

Sale Price. **2/- HEARTHRUGS** Regd. *Sale Price.* **2/-**

In Reversible Rich Turkey patterns, measuring 6ft. long, and 3ft wide. These Hearthrugs have gained a world-wide reputation for Magnificence, Cheapness, and Utility, having no equal. Registered New Designs, and considered Works of Art. Thousands of *repeat orders* and testimonials received, giving the highest satisfaction.

SPECIAL OFFER.—3 for 5/9, 6 for 11/3, 12 for 22/-.

The "Queen's" Royal Household Carpets and Hearthrugs are patronised by Royalty, Nobility, and Clergy from all parts of the Empire.

Gigantic Sale of the "QUEEN'S ROYAL" Household Reversible Rich Turkey Pattern

CARPETS (REG.)

TRADE MARK ON ALL GOODS. BEWARE OF IMITATIONS.

ADMITTEDLY THE CHEAPEST IN THE WORLD. Woven without seam. Altogether superior quality, with handsome border to correspond. A marvel for excellence and beauty. Thousands of repeat orders and testimonials received giving the highest satisfaction. When ordering, please mention if for Bed, Dining, Drawing, or Sitting Room, and any particular colour preferred.

Reduced Sale Price.	Reduced Sale Price.	Reduced Sale Price.	Reduced Sale Price.
6ft. by 9ft.....7/6	9ft. by 9ft. 11/-	10½ft. by 12ft.....18/-	12ft. by 15ft..... 25/6
8ft. by 9ft.....9/-	9ft. by 10½ft. 13/6	12ft. by 12ft.....21/-	12ft. by 18ft. 30/-
6ft. by 12ft.....10/6	9ft. by 12ft.....15/-	9ft. by 15ft. 19/6	12ft. by 21ft..... 35/6
	9ft. by 13½ft.....16/6	12ft. by 13½ft. ...22/-	

COLOSSAL SALE OF RICH VELVET PILE *Sale Price.*

REAL BRUSSELS HEARTHRUGS 5/6

In Rich Oriental and Indian Art Designs, measuring 6ft. by 3ft., which for price, real value, weight and richness of manufacture will be found unapproachable.

SPECIAL OFFER.—3 Rugs, 16/-; 6 for 31/-.

"Melville Castle, Glasswade, Midlothian, June 1st.

The Right Honourable The VISCOUNTESS MELVILLE writes: "I am very pleased with the 'Royal' Velvet Hearthrugs to hand, and would like four more Hearthrugs. Her ladyship would also like two Velvet Carpets at 39/-, one ditto 60/6 to match them. Cheque £8 14s. inclosed."

COLOSSAL SALE OF RICH VELVET PILE

REAL BRUSSELS CARPETS

Extraordinarily Heavy, very best Quality, Newest and Choicest Designs. In Old Gold, Sultan, Terra-Cotta, Crimson, Sky, Navy, and the latest colours. With handsome border to correspond. Guaranteed to wear for years, and give every satisfaction. The sizes and prices as follows (all ready for putting down):

REDUCED SALE PRICE LIST,	4½ft. by 7ft.....11/-	VELVET PILE BRUSSELS CARPET SQUARES.	9ft. by 12ft. 38/-
	6ft. by 9ft.....18/-		11ft. by 12ft. 47/-
	7½ft. by 9ft.....23/-		12ft. by 13½ft.....59/-
	9ft. by 9ft.....28/-		12ft. by 16ft. 69/-
	9ft. by 10½ft.....33/-		12ft. by 18ft. 77/-

Altogether superior quality, with handsome border to correspond. A marvel of excellence and beauty. Thousands of repeat orders and testimonials received, giving the highest satisfaction. When ordering, please mention if for Bed, Dining, Drawing or Sitting Room, and any particular colour preferred.

Also **RICH VELVET PILE STAIR CARPETS**, bordered to match, 18in. wide, **1/8** per yard; 22½in. wide, **2/-** per yard; 27in. wide, **2/3** per yard.

640 WHITE HONEYCOMB QUILTS, full size, 4/11 each.

These are sound, useful Bed Spreads, made from good quality cotton yarns, in diamond and various small designs, average size, 2¾yd. long and 2yd. wide, with all round knotted fringe.

OUR NEW VENTURE.—Yes, Two different Pattern Hearthrugs or Carpets for the Price of One!

H.R.H. Prince L. of Battenberg.
H.R.H. Prince K. Bigit Siam.
Marquis of Breadalbane.
Sir Henry de Bathe.
Sir Henry Bellingham.
Sir E. H. Blair, Bart.
Archbishop of York.
H.I.H. Eugénie de Christoforo.
Princess Palæologce Nicephorce.
Commence
Princess de Croy.

Copyright.
Duchess of Wellington.
Marchioness of Breadalbane.
Marchioness of Hastings.

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE (CHANCERY DIVISION). HODGSON v. WEBB BROTHERS.—On the 18th day of July, 1890, his lordship Mr. Justice Chitty granted an interim injunction restraining Messrs. Webb Brothers, of Hackney Wick, from infringing Mr. Fredk. Hodgson's Trade Mark, "Eclipse," No. 93,774 (Leeds).

"Given Away."

SPECIAL. 1898.

SPECIALLY REDUCED INTRODUCTION

SALE PARCEL WITH FREE GIFT

enclosed, consisting of

1 Magnificently Rich Cream-Coloured Curly Sheepskin Hearthrug, average size 6 feet by 3 feet, perfection in quality.

1 Beautiful Reversible Art Crimson Plush Bed Rug, Sofa Cover, or Table Cover, double warp, very heavy, size 50 inches by 78 inches.

2 Beautiful Silver Goatskin Door Mats, lined woollen cloth throughout, pinked edges, best finish, ornamental to any room.

1 Best Hair Brush, highly finished, with mirror back.

THE LOT **10/6**

The Green, Bolton Abbey, December 18th.

Lady H. D. Newenham takes this opportunity to thank Messrs. F. Hodgson & Son for the 10/6 Owl parcel sent some little time back. Every article was of more intrinsic value than the price charged. Lady Newenham would like two more parcels. Cheque 21/- enclosed."

Provided *Short Stories* Coupon, 25/6/98, is quoted, a FREE GIFT will be enclosed—a very handsome Electro Silver Plated "OWL" PEPPER STAND with coloured eyes and gilt feet. Also our Bargain Book enclosed gratis. Cash returned if not satisfied.

(Signed) F. HODGSON & SON.

PRODIGIOUS SALE OF THE "PRUDENTIAL"

REVERSIBLE CARPETS (Regd.)

Reversible, with a different pattern on both sides, woven throughout, with handsome border to correspond; richly blended in several colours to suit any furniture. Made in twelve sizes only. These Carpets are the production of much care, labour, and forethought, and are made in handsome and elaborate patterns (which are protected by registration). They combine the rich blended colours of the Turkish and Persian on one side, and on the reverse the elegant designs of the Wilton. These goods cannot be distinguished from real Brussels when laid down, and cannot be excelled in durability.

6ft. by 9ft..... 7½ft. by 9ft. ..... 9ft. by 9ft..... 9ft. by 10½ft. ..... 9ft. by 12ft. ..... 10½ft. by 12ft.....	Reduced Sale Price	4s. 9d. 5s. 11d. 7s. 6d. 8s. 6d. 9s. 6d. 11s. 6d.	9ft. by 15ft..... 12ft. by 12ft..... 12ft. by 13½ft. ..... 12ft. by 15ft..... 12ft. by 18ft..... 12ft. by 21ft.....	Reduced Sale Price	12s. 6d. 12s. 9d. 14s. 6d. 15s. 9d. 19s. 6d. 22s. 6d.

When ordering, please mention if for Bed, Dining, Drawing, or Sitting Room, and (any particular colour preferred.

Blairquhan, Maybole, N.B., Aug. 3rd.—Lady Hunter Blair writes: "Will Messrs. F. Hodgson & Son send her another 'Prudential' Carpet, same as before, crimson and gold, dimensions, 9ft. by 10½ft. Cheque enclosed."

A Reversible "Prudential" Hearthrug (Regd.), to match above Carpets, sent for 1s. 6d. extra, size, 2yd. long and 1yd. wide.

SPECIAL OFFER.—3 Hearthrugs for 4/3 6 for 8/-, or 12 for 15/6. Sterling Value.

High School, Burnham, Maidenhead, Jan. 21st.

F. W. Baker, Esq., writes: "I have received the Carpet and Rug, and feel I must write to thank you for your excellent choice. I have shown them to several of my friends and they all think them remarkable value and very pretty. I trust soon to give you another order."

"SHORT STORIES" CARPET COUPON. 25/6/98.

On receipt of this Coupon and P.O. or Stamps for amount, we guarantee to send any goods as above to your address in any part of the United Kingdom. Cash returned in full if not satisfied. (Signed) F. HODGSON & SON.

We rely upon spontaneous Repeat Orders from our Clients for the Maintenance of our Trade. Established nearly a Quarter of a Century. All orders despatched same day, in rotation, as they arrive by post. Cheques and P.O.'s payable to—

F. HODGSON & SON, Manufacturers, Importers, and Merchants, WOODSLEY ROAD, LEEDS.

Telegraphic Address: "ECLIPSE, LEEDS." National Telephone, No. 948. N.B.—Foreign Orders executed and packed free, and shipped at lowest rates.